

# THE MAN-GOD

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Man---God

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# THE MAN-GOD

A LIFE OF JESUS

BY

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*Archbishop of Chicago*


May 11, 1927

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REVEREND MATTHEW WALSH, C.S.C., PH.D.,  
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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This Life of Jesus, written as a text for the classroom, will serve also, it is hoped, the purpose of general reading. In part the author has followed points of direction marked out in that excellent work, *La Vie de N. S. Jésus Christ* by L'Abbé E. Le Camus, of which there is a very readable translation in English by the Right Rev. William A. Hickey, D. D., Bishop of Providence. Other biographers of the Saviour, including Didon, Meschler, Berthe, have been consulted. Rev. A. E. Breen's *A Harmonized Exposition of the Four Gospels* has been followed in certain details of interpretation. Devotional treatises on Our Lord and synchronistic studies of Gospel narratives have been read carefully and their findings adopted when interpretation did not run counter to the natural meaning of the words of the Saviour.

The author gratefully acknowledges assistance received from the Rev. Lawrence Broughall, C. S. C., A. M., of the Department of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame. Burton Confrey, A. M., of the Department of Education, in the same University, kindly prepared several of the Study Topics, which are used after each chapter. The Preface and Chapter VI, "Jesus: Leader, Teacher," appeared first as separate articles in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, the editor of which has kindly given permission for their reproduction.

On a Life that has been the theme of so many writers in so many different languages one may not hope to be original. Perhaps one should not attempt to be original. One may hope at most to offer a somewhat animated story which will interest and not fatigue, will awaken enthusiasms without being irreverent, and will heighten the human loveliness of Jesus, the Son of Man, without diminishing Jesus, the Son of God.

University of Notre Dame  
May 25, 1927



## PREFACE

The knowledge of the life of Our Lord comes to college and high-school students in detached fragments. These fragments are gathered from the parables heard in Gospel narratives at the Sunday Masses or from certain observations of teachers of religion. All our Catholic colleges and high schools have, of course, classes of religious instruction. But is there a study of the life of the Founder of Christianity from whom all dogmatic and moral teaching receives its origin or approval? From the data at hand it would seem that, although our Catholic colleges and high schools are giving courses in the dogmas and practices of the Catholic religion, there is no systematic study of the life of the Founder of the Catholic Church. The paragraphs that follow contain certain suggestions on the study of the life of Jesus in our schools.

One can hardly acquire a satisfying knowledge of Christ's life if one is not able to visualize somewhat the land in which He labored. Indeed, we cannot make an understanding study of any history or biography if we do not know the land of the race or of the individual under consideration. It is of little use to mention Galilee or Samaria if students do not know where these provinces are situated. They must be placed somewhere. To say it was at Capharnaum that Christ cured the mother-in-law of Simon will really mean no more to them than if this miracle had occurred anywhere else, unless they are able to set this town in a province, and to give its position

with reference to other towns. Imagination must see it north of one place and south of another, with a body of water not so very far away. The unrecorded life of Christ at Nazareth will fall short of the loveliness of reality if students cannot place before them this village, with the quiet country round about. Bethlehem is recalled at Christmas with stirring appeals. Where is Bethlehem? How far from Jerusalem, and in what direction? About how many miles had the holy couple to journey when they went there from Nazareth? Through what provinces had they to pass? Giving the names of unknown places in narrative is as useless as giving the names of unknown people. The mention of what is already known is that which gives the joy of recognition.

Just where to begin with the story proper is, of course, a matter of choice and time and hearers. To go back to Old Testament figures, types, and prophecies may seem more erudite than practical. We must shun a learning which may confuse and frighten. The teacher might begin with an unpretentious picture of the Precursor and a statement of his mission. He was a plain, rugged man himself, and students will appreciate a modest study of him.

In presenting events and in recording parables and similitudes, the elements of locality, social points of view, and what dramatic critics call "setting" should be given as much presentation as time will allow. Two good results will follow from this: students will be interested in what may be called the human-interest side for its own sake, and they will follow the spiritual presentation with more understanding. Thus the stable at Bethlehem should not be merely mentioned. It should be described in its specific Jewish meaning, not in the meaning given to the word today. Nor should the shepherds be dismissed with a few trite phrases. Some considerations on

their habits and points of view will take up time in unpretentious preparatory reading which will be worth while.

Certain elements in Jewish life will prove stimulating and refreshing. In the parables on marriage the teacher may turn aside for a brief period and explain marriage as an institution among the Jews, the ceremonies connected therewith, the marriage portion, the relative position of husband and wife. In the parable of the Prodigal Son we have a story of domestic life which will give rise to considerations on family ties, the rights of the first-born in matters of inheritance, the attitude which Jewish parents generally assumed toward their children. The parables relative to the shepherd, the vintager, the fishermen, will naturally make one give thought to the occupations in which these men were engaged about the time of Christ. Again the story of the man held up and beaten by robbers on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho should not be dismissed with a mere paraphrased rendition. This road, one may be sure, was not selected haphazard. It will make the story human if it be pointed out that this highway, because of its isolated loneliness, was often the scene of robberies and murders.

The parables having for their background the visible world of nature at different seasons of the year can be quickened and brightened by little human touches. The ripe harvests and the growing fields, the Light of the Presence upon the waters, the vineyards and olive groves, may be brought large into the region of seeing if presented in concrete and suggestive language.

Christ's friendships are well illustrated in Lazarus and his sisters, in Peter and John; His tenderness, at the tomb of His buried friend; His affection, in the visit to Bethany on the afternoon preceding the day of His death; His loneliness, in

His tender words of farewell in the upper room following the Supper just before He set out into the dark. There is a broad humanness, too, in His indignation at the money changers, and in the unforgettable metaphors with which He lashed the self-satisfied Scribes and Pharisees.

This stepping aside from the main road may seem to stay the progress of the story, but all history, all biography, is subject to the same retardment. And this very turning off to linger over intimate, untrodden asides is what makes life narratives humanly interesting. Of course, one must not linger too long, nor become minute to weariness, and so lose sight of the main road. To be able to step aside and not linger unduly, to digress and yet make progress, is three-fourths of the art of story-telling.

It will be helpful before each class period to give the briefest synopsis of the previous lesson. Thus will be preserved lines of contact. There is present here, of course, the danger of repetition. If we group the parables and similitudes according to the kind of life or activity out of which they come, one statement of this condition of life or activity will suffice for all. Thus the vineyard, the fold, and the harvest parable groups may be considered. Or, again, those parables which have for their background domestic relationships or certain social institutions may be similarly grouped.

Of course, there is not in all spiritual biography anything more delightful than the life and personality of Christ. The marvel is that His life is not taught more insistently. If presented with occasional quickenings of concrete and suggestive language, in which bits of landscape are insinuated, character analysis hinted, and human-interest happenings set down that stir the gentler emotions, they must surely find listening minds and quickened hearts.



Generally speaking, the lives of saints that come to us are dull and remote. Unconsciously, those who write these lives make their heroes unlovely. They set them on a towering Sinai, and speak of rhapsody, vision, and prophecy; whereas we crave for human contact with their lives on the plains. They are shut up in caves and their every utterance made oracular. They are in the deep mid-sea, and we hear only the thunder of waves that come from afar. Why cannot the holy be human? Why cannot they be brought nearer to us and yet not let go the hand of God? People fail to read the lives of saints, not because they do not admire the saints, but because the biographers of the saints obscure them with light. They present what Robert Louis Stevenson, in writing of Father Damien, called the "wax abstract" for the reality.

All this is not digression. The purpose is to show that what is true of the lives of Christ's servants is true of Christ Himself. We do not lessen Him by giving emphasis to His Humanity when writing about Him. Almost everywhere we meet Him, the human veils the divine. The rustle of His garments and the fall of His feet can be heard in His passing. He is in the storm sometimes, and in the roll of thunder, and in the white light of Thabor. But mostly He is in the silences and in the subdued voices by the waters, on the flat fields and where the bending grain stems are yellow.

Whoever can present Christ's compelling story without useless ejaculations and ambitious embellishments, without trite comment and superfluous preachment, will give a keepsake to our youth which they will treasure always in a shrine apart.

Our teachers—many of them priests—can be eloquent about history, can feel the quickenings of inspiration when they present what is full of richness and comfort in literature; they can be penetrating in subjects that relate to the movements and

readjustments of matter; can be mathematically clear and concise and make distinctions with logical finesse. But surely there is no such loveliness as the loveliness of Christ, no story so interesting, no messages like His to call for serious consideration and cautious interpretation.

We see Jesus in His Church. If we would have our students love the Church more, we must teach them more about Jesus. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life. If they follow Him they will reach their heaven; if they know Him, they will know the Source of all Truth; if they find Him, they will find Life Itself.

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## INTRODUCTORY

### I. THE WRITERS OF THE GOSPELS

*Gospels Not a Life Story of Christ; Evangelists Recorded What They Remembered or What Was Told to Them of Three-Years' Ministry; Differences in Narratives; No Contradictions; Levi the Tax-Gatherer Becomes Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist; Wrote in Hebrew; His Record an Appeal to the Jews; Gospel Written Six Years after the Ascension; Emphasizes the Fact That in Jesus the Prophecies Were Fulfilled; St. Mark Wrote in Greek; Gives a Record of the Public Life of Jesus as Preached by St. Peter; St. Luke Friend of St. Paul; Physician by Profession; Acts of the Apostles a Gospel Appendix; The Oral Gospel; Its Meaning; Gospels of Progressive Growth; First Three Evangelists Concerned with the External Life of Christ; St. John Takes Up Spiritual Meaning of His Mission; Intimate Friend of Jesus; Gospel Probably Written on Patmos; Gospels Make an Objective Story; The Truth of the Gospels Is the Truth of the Holy Spirit.*

The four Gospels are not a life story of Christ. They are not even a complete record of the three years of His public ministry. The Evangelists do not record all He did, much less all He said, but only what they remembered of both, and what was reported to them as having been seen or heard by others. They were not all of them present at the same time or at the same place. Hence certain events, certain instructions, are recorded by some and not by others. As a result we note points of disagreement in these Gospels which, exegetes explain, do not weaken the general integrity of the Evangelists.

The fact that two of the Gospel writers were not in the company of Jesus, that all of them recorded what they remembered, without, perhaps, the assistance of notes to stimulate memory, and that the writing of these Gospels was an after-

thought—all this should make unsurprising some lesser points of disagreement between Gospel and Gospel. There are no contradictions of fact or doctrine, because of the divine guiding of the Holy Spirit. Although, for instance, the consecration at the Last Supper is told differently by the three Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, yet the essential fact of the consecration is the same in all.<sup>1</sup>

We find Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, a contemporary of St. Polycarp, setting down this interesting information about the writings of St. Matthew and St. Mark:

Matthew has written the discourses of the Lord in Hebrew, and each one has translated this text as best he could. As for St. Mark, the presbyter John said that he, as interpreter of St. Peter, had carefully put down all that his memory retained, yet without putting the discourses and the acts of the Lord in their exact order. What is there astonishing in this? He himself had neither heard nor followed the Master. Attached to the person of St. Peter, he was familiar only with the traditions of that Apostle, who in his preaching earnestly sought, not the chronological order of the Lord's discourses, but merely the needs of his hearers. Hence we must not blame Mark for not having written certain things which his memory furnished him. He endeavored only to omit nothing he had heard, and to relate only what was most exact.<sup>2</sup>

Who were these men to whom we are indebted for practically everything that comes down to us of the story of Jesus? In the opinion of the Church, St. Matthew is the author of the first of the four Gospels. From tax-gatherer he became Apostle; from Levi behind the desk, taking in the tax-tribute, which was an unfailing reminder to the Jews of their bondage, Matthew appears in the new rôle of follower and future biographer of Jesus. No doubt the new name Matthew—Gift of

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi, 28; Mark xiv, 24; Luke xxii, 20. <sup>2</sup> Eusebius: *Hist. Eccles.* as quoted in *The Life of Christ*, I, 24, by Mgr. E. Le Camus. Translated by Right Rev. Wm. A. Hickey.



God—was, like the new name Paul, symbolic of the new life. Origen, referring to St. Matthew as the author of the first of the four Gospels, declares:

As I have understood from tradition respecting the four Gospels, which are the only undisputed ones in the whole Church of God throughout the world, the first is written according to St. Matthew, the same that was once a publican but afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ, who having published it for the Jewish converts, wrote it in Hebrew.<sup>1</sup>

In his record of the public life of Jesus St. Matthew appealed directly to the Jews. He wrote in Hebrew or Cyro-Chaldaic about six years after the Ascension of Jesus. It seems to have been his purpose to summon every prophetic reference in the Old Testament to the Messiah and to show that these prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus. This we readily recognize from the frequent reminder that certain events took place "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled."

Papias classifies the Gospel of St. Mark as memoirs. The original was written in Greek and published at Rome. It is probable that St. Mark's story of the Saviour's public life is a record of what the Apostle Peter had told him directly, or what he had heard the chief of the Apostolic College preach to the people. Eusebius quotes Papias to support this view:

And John the Presbyter also said this, Mark being interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he recorded he wrote with great accuracy but not, however, in the order in which it was spoken or done by Our Lord, for he neither heard nor followed Our Lord; but, as said before, he was in company with Peter, who gave him such instruction as was necessary, but not to give a history of Our Lord's discourses. Wherefore Mark has not erred in anything, by writing some things as he has recorded them; for he was carefully attentive to one thing, not to pass by anything that he heard, or to state anything falsely in these accounts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* VI, 25. <sup>2</sup> Eusebius: *Eccles. Hist.* III, 39. Quoted by Rev. E. A. Breen: *A Harmonized Exposition of the Gospels*, I, 5.

Clement of Alexandria strengthens this opinion:

When Peter had proclaimed the Word publicly at Rome under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as there were a great number present, they requested Mark, who had followed him from afar, and remembered well what he had said, to reduce these things to writing, and that after composing the Gospel he gave it to those who requested it of him. Which, when Peter understood, he neither directly hindered nor encouraged it.<sup>1</sup>

The opinion is quite generally held that the Gospel of St. Mark is based on the preaching of St. Peter. The purpose of this Evangelist was to present an animated record of the Master's public life. Probably he was in Rome while composing his narrative, and there seems good reason to suppose those co-workers, SS. Peter and Paul, were there also. Exegetes call attention to the intrinsic evidence that St. Mark epitomizes the teachings which were preached to the Gentiles. The divinity of Jesus is proved more from the miracles which He wrought, which must carry greater weight with the Gentiles, than from the prophecies fulfilled in Him, which appealed to the Jews.

The authorship of the third Gospel is ascribed to St. Luke. Classed among the uncircumcised, this gentle chronicler of the Birth of the Messiah became a devoted follower of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Indeed, it has been declared that St. Luke was to St. Paul what St. Mark was to St. Peter.

Eusebius tells us that St. Luke was born in Antioch, was a physician by profession, and the author of a Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

But Luke, who was born at Antioch, and by profession a physician, being for the most part connected with Paul, and familiarly acquainted with the rest of the Apostles, has left us in two inspired books the institutes of the spiritual healing art which he obtained from them. One of these is his Gospel, in which he testifies that he has recorded as those who were from the beginning eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word, delivered to him, whom also he says he has in all things followed.

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius: *Eccles. Hist.* VI, 14. Breen: *Id.* i, 6.

The other is his Acts of the Apostles, which he composed, not only from what he had heard from others, but from what he had seen.<sup>1</sup>

We note, too, that St. Luke in his Gospel modifies or omits certain statements which might prove offensive to the Gentiles. Thus the Saviour's prohibition, "Go not in the ways of the Gentiles," recorded by St. Matthew, is omitted by St. Luke. The story of the Syro-Phoenician woman whose daughter was freed from devil possession by the Saviour is told by St. Matthew<sup>2</sup> and by St. Mark,<sup>3</sup> but is omitted by St. Luke because of the phrase, "I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Though a physician by profession, St. Luke brings none of the traditional skepticism of medical science to his story of the Life of Jesus. He accepts the miraculous nature of the events he narrates with a humility that makes him altogether lovable. He has been called the Evangelist of the Blessed Virgin, because from him we learn so much of Mary's part in the story of the Redemption.

St. Luke did not see Jesus here on earth. Yet in his story he is careful to secure from genuine sources what he puts in writing. He gives as far as possible a complete story: The miraculous Birth, the choosing of the Apostles, Preaching and Miracles, Trial, Condemnation, Death, Burial, and Resurrection.

As already stated, there are certain divergences in the Gospels. Particularly is this true, according to commentators, in the narratives of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. The fact that the Gospel writers had to depend on their memories going back over some years will make points of disagreement inevitable. They either came into contact with Christ Himself—as in the case of St. Matthew and St. John—or they heard the divine story from the lips of the Apostles, or found a rich

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius: *Hist. Eccles.* III, 4. <sup>2</sup> Matt. xv, 21-28. <sup>3</sup> Mark vii, 24-30.

source of information in what has come to be called the Oral Gospel.

The development of the Oral Gospel requires a word of explanation. After the Ascension the Apostles and disciples remained for some time in Jerusalem, where they gathered the faithful followers of Jesus into little assemblies for instruction. Each Apostle told in his own way the story of his Master. In the course of time the work of announcing the word assumed greater proportions, because of the daily increasing number of converts. Instead of a limited assembly, the world became the audience of these preachers of the Word. In consequence, zealous, prudent, intelligent men were chosen, to whom was confided the task of unfolding the great story of the Son of God made Man. These preachers had heard that wonderful story from the lips of the Apostles themselves. They remembered it; perhaps had written down certain phrases or sentences to assist a weak memory. Many of them, out of zeal for accuracy, wrote down the entire story. It is from these written records that the Evangelists received the facts which we find recorded in their Gospels.

The Gospels, moreover, were of progressive growth. Papias informs us that St. Matthew at first recorded only the discourses of the Saviour, later adding incidents which were held together in narrative form. It is true that he remembered many of these incidents through direct contact with his Master, but we may be sure he went to the Oral Gospel for confirmation of much which he set down.

The first three Evangelists are concerned for the most part with the external life of Christ. His latest biographer, St. John, emphasizes His divine origin and the spiritual meaning of His mission. The Beloved Disciple was especially fitted for such a task. He was the Apostle of intimate communications and honored trusts. He received sacred messages not intended

for the others, and to him the dying Son confided His Virgin Mother. Like St. Peter, St. John was a fisherman who made a living out of Lake Genesareth. We learn from St. Mark that his father, Zebedee, kept servants, from which we may infer that the future Apostle did not live in the sordid poverty of the average Jew. His mother, the somewhat ambitious Salome, became a devoted follower of Jesus and rejoiced that her sons transferred discipleship from the Precursor to the Messiah.

In the seclusion of Patmos,<sup>1</sup> according to tradition, the Beloved Disciple wrote his intimate story of Jesus. The opening chapter sets forth the divine origin of the Saviour, in contrast to the opening chapter of St. Matthew, which gives the genesis of His human birth. The first chapter of St. John has often been called sublime. It suggests the theology of relations in the triune God. It is metaphysical, freed from those terms of sense which we note in the opening chapters of the other Evangelists. Probably the heresies which had already risen within the Church will explain why this last Evangelist gives more emphasis to the teachings of Christ than to the external events of the three years' ministry. The Saviour of St. John is not, of course, essentially different from the Saviour portrayed by the other Evangelists. He presents to us a more intimate picture as the result of a more intimate knowledge.

The Gospels, then, are direct, simple stories told in a detached, objective manner, the personality of the writer being almost entirely suppressed. With the exception of St. John, the Evangelists announce without coloring or warmth. They show very few enthusiasms. They present an objective story, which they rarely attempt to interpret.

This is altogether in accordance with the divine plan. The Holy Ghost transmitted to these simple chroniclers the por-

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<sup>1</sup> An island in the Aegean Sea.

traiture of the divine Teacher and a direct statement of what He preached. They are announcers, not expositors. It is not for them to formulate judgments or to express doctrines in terms of theological science. The Spirit of God is the Author of their testaments; they but express Him. "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. . . . But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."<sup>1</sup> St. Peter speaks of those "that have preached the Gospel to you, the Holy Ghost being sent down from heaven."<sup>2</sup> Finally, St. Paul assures us he has his Gospel "from the Holy Spirit, who speaks in his soul."<sup>3</sup>

The Gospels are not complete records, but they are absolutely correct. An ambitious historian might have given us a more extended story, a more graceful and a more finished biography. But it would fall short of the accuracy of these Gospel records, which were written under divine supervision.

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<sup>1</sup> John xiv, 16, 26.<sup>2</sup> Peter i, 12.<sup>3</sup> Eph. iii, 5.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. What benefit do you expect to derive from a course in the Life of Christ?
2. In what style are the Gospels written? Are they wordy? Loose? Descriptive?
3. Why is it necessary to show the conditions under which the Gospels were written in order to understand them?
4. Why do not the divergences in the Gospels lessen their value?
5. What was the purpose behind each of the four Gospels?
6. Why did not the Apostles interpret the Life of Christ?
7. Why must we believe in the Gospels?



## SUGGESTED READINGS

The students in each group will wish to read more than is contained in this text. To them the following books are recommended.

Berthe, A. C., C.S.S.R.: *Jesus Christ, His Life, His Passion, His Triumph*, tr. by Rev. F. Girandy, C.S.S.R. Herder, St. Louis, Mo.

Didon, Henri, O.P.: *Jesus Christ*. 2 vols. Herder, St. Louis, Mo.

Elliott, Walter, C.S.P.: *Life of Jesus Christ*. Paulist Press, New York City.

Fouard, Constant Henri: *Christ, the Son of God*. 2 vols. Longmans, New York City.

Higgins, James: *The Story Ever New; A Life of Jesus Christ for Grammar Grade Children*. Macmillan, New York City.

Le Camus, E., Mgr.: *The Life of Christ*, tr. by Hickey, William A., Cathedral Library Ass'n., New York City.

Loyola, Mother Mary: *Jesus of Nazareth*, ed. by H. Thurston. Benziger Bros., New York City.

Maas, Anthony J., S.J.: *Life of Jesus Christ*. Herder, St. Louis, Mo.

Maas, Anthony J., S.J.: "Jesus Christ," in *Catholic Encyc.* 8:374-85.

Meschler, Moritz, S.J.: *The Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God*, tr. from the German. 2 vols. Herder, St. Louis, Mo.

## II. GENEALOGIES OF JESUS

*Divine and Human Origin; Son of God, Son of Man; St. John Writes of Divine Origin; SS. Matthew and Luke, of the Human; St. Luke Writes of the Birth; St. John of the Son Begotten of the Unbegotten Father; In Him Was Life; In Him Was Light; World Refused to See the Light; Fall of Adam; Illuminations from Time to Time; But the Majority of the Human Race Remained in Darkness; Incarnation and Redemption; Testimonies to the Light; John the Baptist's Testimony; St. Matthew's Genealogy; Shows Jesus Is Heir to Throne of David through Foster Father; St. Luke Shows Jesus a Descendant of Kings of Israel through Joachim; Christ Not Alone Saviour of the Jews but of All Peoples; St. Matthew Goes from Cause to Effect; St. Luke from Effect to Cause; St. Matthew Derived His Information for Genealogy from Relatives of St. Joseph; St. Luke from Relatives of the Blessed Virgin. (Matt. i; Luke iii; John i.)*

Jesus has a twofold origin, divine and human; out of time and out of eternity. Hence we are accustomed in the language of theology to speak of Christ as the Son of God and as the Son of Man. As the first He has a begotten origin from all eternity; as the second He was begotten in a divine way, born of a human Mother, and lived a span of life like other men.

Of the divine, the Evangelist St. John writes in the opening chapter of his Gospel. St. Matthew gives us His human genealogy, tracing His line from Abraham to Joseph, his foster father, and to Mary, His Mother. St. Luke gives a genealogy differing somewhat from that of St. Matthew, and more specifically the story of His birth in the stable at Bethlehem.

St. John speaks of the Son of God as the Word begotten of the unbegotten Father from all eternity. The primal source of all life is the Father, from whom all things proceed. But,

as theologians tell us, nothing comes into existence without the intervention of the Word; and so all activity, whether spiritual or material, comes out of the Father through Him, and bears His impress and follows His governing. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." From this life all other life comes. "Reasonable souls," says St. Augustine, "have no true light other than the Word of God Himself. He it is that ever gives them nourishment."<sup>1</sup>

That life was indeed the light of men, but unfortunately men did not see the light. Though it shone into the darkness of the world, the world refused to be illuminated. "The darkness did not comprehend it." Adam fell; and that primal, spiritual darkness fell upon the world. There were direct illuminations from time to time. Punishments came to quicken wayward and clouded consciences; prophets trumpeted their messages across the world; out of the thunders of the mountain came the enlightening mandates of Jehovah. But the races of men groped, and wavered, and wandered, and followed strange gods.

Then in the fullness of time, long centuries after the illumination of Creation, came the great illumination of the Incarnation and Redemption. "The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us." Every aid was given that the world might know and receive the Word made Flesh as the true Redeemer. Repeatedly instances were pointed out where prophecies foretelling the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus. Miracles were wrought—miracles of healing and cleansing and of calling back the dead to life—so that the world might see that God made Man had come upon the earth. John the Baptist was selected to preach penance and conversion and to give testimony to the Light. Publicly he testified to the divine generation of Jesus. He proclaimed Him as the only begotten Son of God, who

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<sup>1</sup> *De Gen. ad Litt.*, I, v, 30.

came down from heaven to enlighten and save the world and to dispense mercy and help forever.

According to the divine genealogy, as stated by St. John the Evangelist, Jesus is the Son of God come from the Father from all eternity, and not created; God of God, Light of Light, true God begotten of the Eternal Father before all ages. It is this divine nature in Jesus which St. John, more than any of the other Evangelists, emphasizes in his Gospel.

St. Matthew, in presenting the human genealogy, had in mind chiefly to show that the Messiah, though born of a Virgin, was nevertheless heir to the throne of David. Since women were excluded from royal heredity, how could this Virgin communicate to her Son rights which she herself did not possess? Joseph, the husband of Mary according to Jewish law, was in David's royal line also. So that even if Jesus could not become heir to the throne of David through His mother, it was permitted Him to become such through His foster father. Thus the Evangelist makes secure the place of Jesus in the royal succession through Joseph, the legal husband of Mary. St. Matthew, then, because he is interested in securing the legal status of his Master, follows the genealogical line coming down from Abraham to Joseph.

Side by side with this characteristically Jewish genealogy we have that of St. Luke, the object of which is also to prove that Jesus, Son of a Virgin, was, according to the flesh, a true descendant of the kings of Israel. He had the same difficulty to meet—the Jewish law which St. Matthew encountered. Lineage must be established through the father, not through the mother. But as the father was wanting in this case, Jesus must be referred to the grandfather. Hence the name of the mother is suppressed and the name of the reputed father, Joseph, inserted and traced to Heli. St. Luke begins his

genealogy in this way: "And Jesus Himself was beginning about the age of thirty years; being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph, who was of Heli, who was of Mahat, etc."<sup>1</sup> Heli, according to some exegetes, is an abbreviation of Eliachim, and Eliachim is synonymous with Joachim, who was, according to general tradition, the father of the Blessed Virgin.

In brief, then, St. Matthew, in establishing the right in the kingly line of his divine Master, considers St. Joseph as the husband of the Blessed Virgin; though, of course, he keeps distinct in his own mind the position which St. Joseph holds in the scheme of Redemption. St. Luke makes no reservations, but goes back to the father of the Virgin Mother herself as the last in the line.

The genealogy of St. Luke does not stop with Abraham, as does that of St. Matthew. Jesus did not come for one race of people only, but for the whole world. Abraham was the spiritual father of all the Jews. Christ was before Abraham and so could say with truth: "Before Abraham was made I am." Jesus' mission was not a mission of nationalism; it was universal. Hence St. Luke traces His descent through Adam, the primal father of the human family, to God.

The genealogy of St. Matthew followed the descending course of generations from cause to effect. He began with what, to the Jewish mind, was the beginning of Jewish life and Jewish nationhood through a long succession of generations. This would serve a twofold purpose. It would awaken racial pride among the Jews that the Prophet and Redeemer was born of their blood. This in turn might serve to stir their souls to a renewal of loyalty to His Apostles and to an acceptance of their teachings.

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed explanation of the genealogy of the Saviour the reader is referred to the chapter, "Genealogy of Jesus" in Vol. I of *The Life of Christ*, by Mgr. E. Le Camus.

St. Luke in his genealogy goes from effect to cause. Very probably the Evangelist made use of records then in existence, transcribing without note or comment. His genealogy goes back along the long line from Joseph through Adam to God Himself. He has omitted no names, illustrious or not. In the long list the names that follow the name of David are for the most part unknown in Jewish history. The number of generations in St. Luke's genealogy corresponds somewhat to the number of years that had elapsed.

According to Mgr. E. Le Camus, St. Matthew seems to have derived the information for his genealogy from the relatives of St. Joseph; whereas St. Luke went to sources emanating from the Blessed Virgin. Both sought in behalf of their Master His title to nobility and have set down in their narratives the record of His work and teaching.

Not unfittingly may this chapter be concluded with an excerpt from the Encyclical Letter by His Holiness Pius XI on Jesus Christ as King, dated December 11, 1925:

. . . Christ Himself gives testimony of His empire; as when He spoke in His last sermon to the people concerning rewards and punishments to be meted out to the just and the wicked; when He answered the Roman Governor inquiring publicly whether He was a King; when, after He had risen, He committed to the Apostles the charge to teach and baptize all nations as far as they could, attributing to Himself the name of King, and solemnly declared that all power was given to Him in heaven and on earth, by which words He can mean only the magnitude of His power and the infinitude of His kingdom. It is not surprising, therefore, if He who is called "Prince of the Kings of the Earth" be the same who appeared to the Apostle in his vision of the future, "having on His garment and on His thigh written: "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," for the Father hath appointed Him (Christ) "heir of all things," and it behooveth Him to reign until, at the end of the world, He shall place all His enemies under the feet of God the Father. From this common teaching of the sacred books, it must certainly follow that the Catholic Church, which is the kingdom of Christ on earth, in order to bring before all men and in all lands its Author and Founder, through the



yearly cycle of the sacred liturgy, should hail Him King and Lord and King of Kings in manifold ceremonies of veneration. As in her oldest offices of praise and in her ancient sacramentaries she has used these expressions of honor, all expressing one and the same thing in a marvelous variety of voices, so in her public prayers offered daily to the divine Majesty and in the immolation of the Immaculate Victim she uses them at present; in this perpetual laudation of Christ as King, it is easy to perceive the most beautiful agreement between our own and the Oriental rites, so that in this matter also it is right to say: "The law of prayer determines the law of belief."

### SUGGESTIONS

St. Jerome says, "He who knows Jesus Christ has all knowledge."

In 1898 Pope Leo XIII granted an indulgence of 300 days, for each reading, to all those who read the Scriptures for a quarter of an hour.

Have an object in reading the Gospel narrative; for instance, the establishment of a closer relationship with Jesus. Form the habit of visiting Him in the Blessed Sacrament every time you pass.

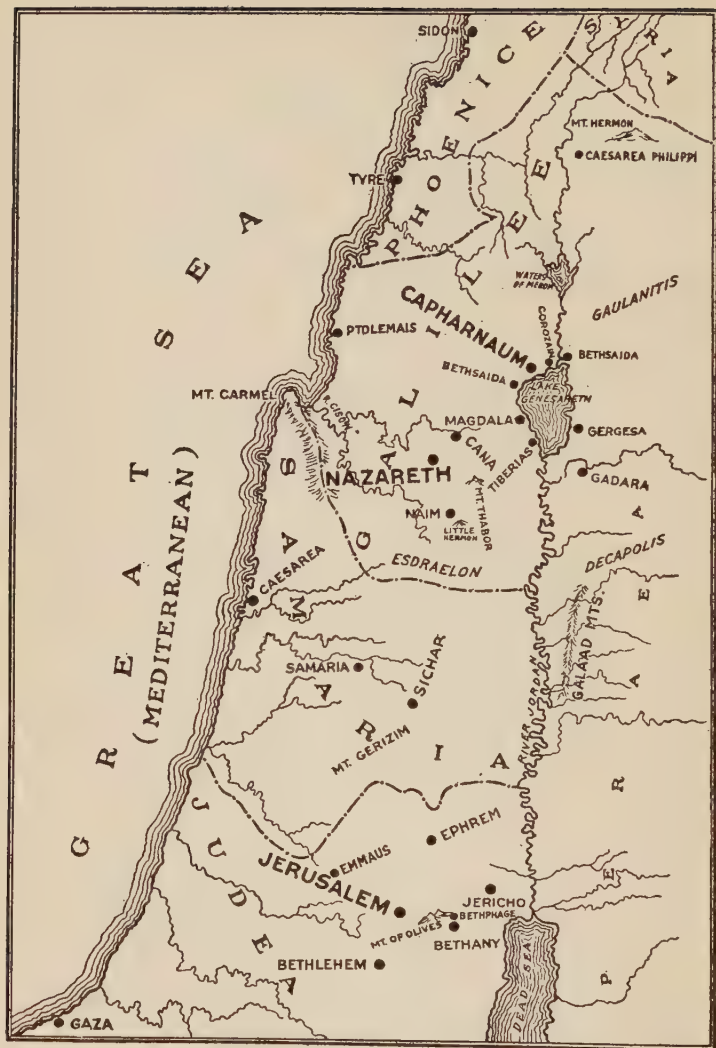
Examine pictures relating to the life of Christ to find a favorite. Study representations of Him in the windows of churches. In addition to pictures of Christ alone (as a Child—"The Sign of the Cross"; at the age of twelve—"Christ in the Temple"; as a Man—"The Prayer in the Garden," "The Light of the World," "Christ and the Rich Young Man," "The Crucifixion"), consider representations of the Nativity—Correggio's "Holy Night," "Madonna and Child," "The Holy Family," "The Flight into Egypt," "The Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph."

Follow the Way of the Cross each day. Study the face of Jesus in each Station.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. In what part of the Mass is the first Gospel of St. John read?
2. What is the value of knowing the genealogy of Christ?
3. In the twentieth century how is lineage established?
4. Explain the difference among the genealogies as cited by the different Evangelists.
5. Which is of most value?
6. How do you account for the fact that the Jews did not recognize Christ as an heir of David?





THE HOLY LAND IN THE TIME OF CHRIST

## THE LIFE

### I. THE COUNTRY OF HIS BIRTH

*Divisions of Palestine; Judea; The Capital; Jericho; Bethlehem; The People of Judea; Pharisees; Scribes; Sadducees; Galilee; Tiberias the Capital; Galileans; Their Mode of Life; Samaria; The Social Position of the Samaritans; Peraea, the Land beyond the Jordan; Relations between the People beyond the Jordan and the Rest of Palestine.*

The country honored for all time as the birthplace of Our Blessed Saviour was a small Roman province situated where three great natural divisions of the world meet—Asia, Africa, and Europe. It consisted of a plateau that rose about 2500 feet above sea-level and extended across from the desert to the Mediterranean Sea, and in length from beyond the Dead Sea to the foothills of Hermon.

The land was differently named at different periods in its long, eventful history. Sometimes it was called the Land of Canaan, sometimes Israel, and sometimes Judea. In modern times it is usually spoken of as Palestine or the Holy Land.

In the time of Our Lord, Palestine was divided into four provinces—Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and Peraea. Geographically these four provinces formed a political unit and were governed more or less as such; but racially, socially, economically, and even religiously, their inhabitants were as different as if they were separate peoples.

Judea, by far the most important of these provinces, was the southernmost, with the Dead Sea somewhat to the east. Its capital was the historic Jerusalem, the scene of so many woes

and glories. Thither returned to their homes on the occasion of any of the great feasts those Jews obliged to wander from their native land. The glory of Jerusalem, the very heart of Jewish life, was the great temple. It enshrined all the hopes, all the dreams, all the religious loves of Israel. It rose, a thing of majesty, above the rest of the city and seemed to bid welcome to those wandering children of Judea returning to their country.

The southwest part of the Holy City was built on Mount Sion, which David once captured from the Jebusites. Two ravines, the Valley of Cedron on the east, and Hinnom on the west, formed a natural fortification which helped very materially in defensive wars. Numerous gates, which took their names from the localities in which they were placed, formed exits and entrances for the city's one hundred fifty thousand inhabitants, and for the many visitors who went there from near and far. On the northern slope of Mount Sion were Herod's palace, the palaces of the magistrates, the less pretentious homes of minor officials, and the Court of the Sanhedrin.

In Judea also lay Jericho, city of palms and roses, once destroyed and then rebuilt. There lay the valley in which Joshua bade the sun stay its course, and the ravines in which Samson set his strength against the Philistines; there, somewhere in the valley of the turpentine trees, David vanquished Goliath; there Rachel died giving birth to her son Benjamin; there Ruth, following the reapers of Booz, gleaned the wheat and barley of its fields, while she dreamed of home; there lay Bethlehem, along whose narrow street the holy couple walked one evening; and beyond lay the hill country, where the shepherds saw the glory of the light and heard the angel music in the sky.

The inhabitants of Judea were more cultured than the

inhabitants of any of the other provinces. In closer contact as they were with the Holy City, they were naturally better versed in Jewish tradition. To Jerusalem the minds and the hearts of all the Israelites turned. Happy was he who could visit Sion, the City of God, once a year. Happier still he who lived within or near its confines. The Jew of Judea witnessed the splendor of Jewish worship within the Temple, he noted the scrupulous regularity with which the ceremonial rites were carried out, he heard the exposition of his beliefs in the synagogues. His children were educated in all the national traditions, in the sacred books that formed a part of the treasury of Jewish history.

The Jews were much given to religious discussion. It entered into their conversation fully as much as business or sport or politics enters into ours. All the day in the public squares, where the old men sat in the warm oriental sunshine, or in the cool of the evening on the terraces, religious questions were propounded and discussed. Sometimes when friends and relatives were brought together at a banquet or a festival they would lose sight of their material affairs and exchange thoughts on the law of Jehovah and His wonderful dispensations in favor of His own people.

Because of this disposition to discuss religious themes, the Pharisees, that extreme sect of rigorists, found very special favor in Judea. In general this sect professed high patriotism, and paid scrupulous attention to religious ceremonial and certain external actions relating to moral conduct. Their pride of race was especially gratifying to the Jews of Judea; for in the opinion of the Pharisees, there was in their world only the Jewish people, and for all Jews no law but the law of Moses. He who was not circumcised, or a child of Abraham, was an outcast. Beyond Palestine was a world degraded, which no

true Israelite could inhabit. Pharisaism, in fact, became in the course of time synonymous with externalism, rigorism, narrowness, and hypocrisy. Its followers added to law and ceremonial until ritual and law were completely transformed. The great principles of charity, of contrition and humility, were supplanted by a series of puerile observances. The fasts, ablutions, attitudes, varieties of vestments, and strange observances degenerated into a ridiculous assemblage of ceremonies that were utterly meaningless.

To this same sect of the Pharisees belonged the Scribes, or "men of the Scripture," whose chief work seems to have been translating and expounding the sacred writings. What the Pharisee was to the Jew's moral life, the Scribe was to his mental life. The people brought their questions to these doctors of the law and awaited their solutions with eager attention. In general, it may be added, the Scribes proved unworthy of the confidence placed in them; for instead of giving serious and useful instruction, they very generally wasted their time in barren discussion.

The Sadducees, may, for convenience, be called the rationalists among the more ancient Jews. They ridiculed the teachings of the Scribes and the forms of the Pharisees; they mingled freely with the pagans and followed their mode of life; they chose an easy way and recognized no hard and fast rules of conduct. In fact they gave up the high sense of patriotism of the nobler Jews, and deteriorated into materialists who sought the help of the usurer and winked at his successes.

Judea, then, was the heart of Palestine; Jerusalem the heart of Judea. Out of the Holy City to Judea, and through Judea on to the other provinces, went religion, tradition, education, and whatever else lifts peoples' lives above the sordid and the base. And while it is true that many of the leaders

of Judea were self-seeking and hypocritical, the slaves of ritual rather than the wise exponents of religious faith, yet it is equally true that the masses among the Jews of this favored province were sincere followers of the God of their fathers and illustrated their faith with simple, lowly lives.

Galilee, the most northern of the provinces, lay between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. On the face of the country rose stately hills and great oak forests. In well-cultivated gardens were grown the native vegetables; and stretching over the plains and along the hillsides were vineyards and olive and fig plantations. Tiberias, the capital, was largely inhabited by Greeks. Perhaps it was because of this intercourse with foreigners that the Jews of Galilee were looked upon as aliens by their brethren of Judea. Yet the Galileans were a sturdy race of peasants and fishermen, faithful to God, brave in war, and industrious in peace. Fishing-boats manned by these men of the north, who lived in the matter of material comforts the simplest lives, dotted the much-mentioned Lake of Genesareth. And along the lake towns the Galilean fisherman disposed of the haul gathered into his net.

Those Galileans who gave their time to farming worked their lands with intelligent concern. The pastures, the grain fields, the vineyards, the olive and fig plantations, bore testimony to their industry in the time of Christ. Much of what was produced was not needed for home consumption; hence the highway to the sea was traversed by conveyances bearing Galilean products to Ptolemais, Cesarea, and other coast towns.

The Galilean was simple in his tastes. He was not disputatious and critical and given to propounding theological questions. He lived his religious life as a peasant lives it, satisfied with what a wise God made known to him, and not troubled with those subtleties which occupied the minds of his more



aristocratic countrymen of Judea. He went to Jerusalem for the great feasts as a supreme act of religious worship; he made visits to the synagogues and listened to the doctors with profound respect. The Holy City was, to his direct, simple mind, a place to be loved and wondered at, and carried away in grateful memory. In a word, the Galileans were of a type that never passes out of human history. They were unspoiled by progress, by riches, by certain refinements of civilized life that overthrow the domestic virtues and quite obscure the calmer outlook.

Accustomed to labor from childhood, the Galileans readily passed from the arts of peace to the arts of war. Josephus tells us they were brave soldiers. The fields which they cultivated bore mute testimony to their great past. The plains of Esdraelon and of Jezrael witnessed the battles of Gedeon against the Madianites, of Saul against the Philistines, of Achab against the Syrians. There King Josias had fallen before the bowmen of Nechao. Cison was a river of battles, whose waters as they flowed to the west had often been reddened with human blood. All their countryside bore testimony, mute but glorious, to the courage of these simple men of the North. The Judeans paid them a more splendid compliment than ever they intended when they pointed to Our Lord as coming out of Galilee.

The province of Samaria lay between Judea and Galilee and reached from the River Jordan across to the sea. Although geographically situated in the very center of Palestine, Samaria was distinctly outside the pale of Israel. The Samaritan was the despised, the outcast, to the lineal Jew. His land was the habitation of the stranger and the sinner. To the Jew the Samaritan was a creature of chance, filled with every kind of impurity, unworthy of any religious classification. He could



not testify in the courts, was not considered a fit person to offer adoration to Jehovah. He was a sort of moral leper, to touch whom was to invite corruption. His body was considered the fit abode of the evil spirit, and his flesh was again and again compared to the flesh of swine. He was considered the offspring of an idolatrous race, and as such had no recognition in the religious life of the Jews.

In their turn the Samaritans gave back hate for hate. They let no opportunity pass in which to make themselves disagreeable to the Jews. They maltreated the pilgrims passing through their province on the journey between Judea and Galilee; they erected a temple of their own to rival the Temple at Jerusalem, established their own priesthood, and set aside the sacred books which the Jews so revered.

The Samaritans were, of course, nearer to God than the pagans. They stood somewhere between the Jew and the Gentile. Christ came for all, Jew, Gentile—all the fallen race of mankind. Hence He loved all, His mercy going out to the least. Is it any wonder, then, that in His lovely parables, in which He reaches the heights and depths of human nature, He so often speaks of the Samaritans with tenderness, with love, and without reproach?

Peraea, the land beyond the Jordan, extended south from the foothills of Hermon to the Dead Sea. It was a vast extent of country, out of which rose mountains of limestone and basalt with vast tracts of waste land between. The inhabitants, for the most part, lived the unsettled lives of adventurers who attacked and robbed the merchants journeying north to Damascus. The people and the land beyond the Jordan may be said to have been foreign to the life of Palestine proper. In religion, in racial ties, in sympathies and aspirations, these people had very little in common with the Jews. Peraea was "the

unknown land," and remained such through all the struggles of Jewish history.

Palestine, then, was the favored country to which Christ came when He brought salvation to the world. The Jews of Palestine were the people out of whom, in His wisdom, He chose to be born. There were other lands more favored by nature, other peoples more advanced in learning and whatever makes for artistic perfection in civilized life. These were set aside, however, in favor of this nation whose story is somewhat intertwined with the story of all the ancient nations. That many of this race proved unworthy of this high privilege, that they did not know the day of visitation, that they did not receive their Redeemer with simple, upright hearts, merely shows again that the most perfect gift is not always received with gratitude, that races as well as individuals may be set apart for high favors, only to be found unworthy and so merit condemnation. The Jews were chosen as the spiritual forbears of the children of God's Kingdom here upon earth, but they rejected their King, they persecuted and killed Him. Hence they wander over the world, rejected in their turn, their Kingdom possessed by others.

### STUDY TOPICS

Since a knowledge of the geographical background is essential to a proper understanding of history, make a map of the Holy Land for your own benefit, following the general outlines of the map on page 28. For a definite assignment in connection with this chapter, mark: Jerusalem, Jericho, Nazareth, Capharnaum, Naim, Cana, the Dead Sea, Lake Genesareth, Ptolemais, Mt. Tabor, the River Jordan, Bethlehem, Bethany, the Mount of Olives, Tyre, Sidon, Caesarea, Mt. Gerizim.

## II. BIRTH AND INFANCY

*Nazareth, Birthplace of Mary and Joseph; Mary Affianced to Joseph; Announcement of the Angel; Divine Conception of Jesus; Joseph Becomes Spouse of Mary; Roman Census; Holy Couple Journey to Bethlehem; Village Crowded; Holy Couple Seek Shelter in a Grotto; Birth of Jesus; Manifestation to the Shepherds; Their Visit to the Infant; Child Is Circumcised; Ceremony Performed by Joseph; Manifestation to the Magi; Journey to Bethlehem; Stop at Jerusalem; Visit to the Infant; Return to Their Country; Purification and Simeon's Canticle; Flight into Egypt; Herod's Evil Record; Massacre of the Children; Holy Family Return from Egypt to Nazareth. (Luke i, ii; Matthew ii.)*

The town of Nazareth lies almost midway in the province of Galilee. Round about grow cacti, and olive, almond, and fig trees; above, the bright blue Syrian sky looks down on the plains of historic Esdraelon. Probably this little town would never have come down to us as a marked place, only that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was born there; that the angel of the Lord there appeared to her; that there she conceived the Son of God made Man in her virgin womb; that there lived the Holy Family for many years.

At the time of the Blessed Virgin's appearance in the Gospel story she was espoused to St. Joseph, in accordance with a very general Jewish custom for all young girls. They were both born in Nazareth and very likely St. Joseph was older than the Blessed Virgin. There is no Gospel evidence, however, to indicate that he was an old man at the time of the Birth of Christ, as he is so generally represented by Christian artists.

It was some time after the espousals to St. Joseph that the angel appeared to Mary and brought to her the momentous news that she was selected to be the Mother of God. When Mary heard this message she gave her obedience to God's command once she understood its compatibility with the vow of virginity she had already taken. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word." Then the Word was made Flesh. The Incarnation became a reality.

During the time intervening before the Birth, Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, with whom she remained three months. In the first raptures of their meeting, the Holy Virgin poured forth that song of exultation and gratitude which has become part of the sacred literature of the world:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord.

"And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

"Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

"Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His name.

"And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him.

"He hath showed might in His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

"He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.

"He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.

"He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy:

"And He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever."

Mary's legal marriage to St. Joseph followed her return from the visit with her cousin, after the assuring message of the angel had quieted the doubts and scruples of the saintly foster father. Thus was the holy Virgin given a protector in the person of one who was himself a virgin; one who during many years would be the provider and guardian for the Mother and the Child.

The ninth month after the time Mary had received the great announcement drew near. By a coincidence, a census of the Roman empire was ordered for the same year. This circumstance was to take the holy couple to the village of Bethlehem in the province of Judea, which was the town of their ancestors, and where they had to be registered according to law. The month of that memorable visit is uncertain, though probably it took place sometime in the winter.

The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem covered a distance of some eighty miles. It does not seem very far in these days of miracle speed; but it was a long journey then, or seemed long, to people who lived close to their villages and were not accustomed to traverse half a continent overnight, as we do now. Especially was it a long journey for one in Mary's delicate condition, such as might well make any woman timid and anxious. In all probability the journey took a few days, for the caravan which the holy couple joined traveled leisurely. There were frequent stops to rest and to enjoy the hospitality of friends who lived along the countryside. There were many scenes, too, along the way she went to stir the heart of Our Blessed Lady. As she approached the mountains of Judea, memories must have come to her of Rachel, Booz, Ruth, and David; of tender or stirring events that had occurred in other years.

It was early in the evening when the caravan arrived in Bethlehem, a little town situated about eight miles from Jeru-

salem, with the Dead Sea directly to the east. Already great crowds of people had arrived in compliance with the census law. Private homes and such lodging-houses as the village afforded were already taken over by the earlier pilgrims. Even the caravansary, or large inn especially erected for the accommodation of regular travelers, was entirely occupied. The holy couple could find no lodgings. They had arrived too late. The unwillingness to receive them was due not so much to want of hospitality as to lack of room. The only remaining refuge was one of those excavations cut out of the rocks in which animals were housed when the nights were cold.

Into one such grotto Mary and Joseph retreated. It was not a comfortable place, not such a place as one would choose to spend the night in, unless from stress of circumstances. It was there, however, that Mary and Joseph went and found meek beasts for companions. It was there, some hours later, that the Son of God made Man was born and, wrapped in swaddling clothes, was laid away in a manger.

The Evangelist presently changes the scene. He transports us from the manger and the beasts, the divine Child and the adoring couple, to the hill country where shepherds watched their flocks. An angel appeared to these simple men of the fields and announced the birth of the Messiah. "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you." Out of the heavens appeared the angelic hosts, shedding over the quiet night heavenly music that filled the hearts of these hill shepherds with awe. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

"Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us." This



expression of obedience to the divine invitation probably won for these simple shepherds the gift of divine Faith. Whether they knew of the Messianic tradition, whether they knew of Mary and Joseph, we cannot say. Anyhow, without delay, they sped across the quiet country to the grotto where they found the holy pair, and the Infant God laid upon straw in the manger. After a few hours, during which they adored, and then for brief intervals conversed with Mary and Joseph, these hill men returned to their flocks. It was no small honor that to them was first announced the coming of the Redeemer, and that, through them, He was to be proclaimed to the people of Judea.

Eight days after the Birth Mary and Joseph, following the Jewish ceremonial, had the divine Child circumcised. The ceremony took place, not in the Temple nor in the synagogue, but in the house to which the Child had been conveyed shortly after His Birth. This Jewish ceremony was performed in the bosom of the family, and the father was the ordinary minister. Joseph, then, as legal father, exercised this right by saying, as he made the incision: "Blessed be Jehovah the Lord! He hath sanctified His beloved in His mother's womb and has written His law in our flesh. He marks His sons with the sign of the covenant, to give them the blessings of Abraham our father." Those present answered in the words of the psalmist: "May He live whom Thou hast taken for Thy holy child." At this time the Infant was given the name Jesus in compliance with the command of the angel. It is a Name to be loved and praised and sung forever down the ages; a Name to quicken to the highest flights of fancy in art and letters; to call to high resolves and heroic deeds men and women wherever that Holy Name is known.

The next event of importance recorded in the holy Gospel



is the visit of the Magi. To the shepherds who watched their flocks an angel appeared and spoke in the language of the men; to the Magi, those watchers of the sky, a star appeared and spoke to them in the mysterious language of heaven. These students of Zoroaster were not slow in comprehending that message. They brought together such worldly possessions as they needed, mounted their camels, and set out toward the West.

They must have received a rude shock when they reached Jerusalem. The Holy City, busy with its own affairs, seems to have been absolutely ignorant of the Birth of the divine Child. This indifference would have chilled a faith less ardent than theirs. "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and are come to adore Him!" Naturally the visit of these scholars from the East was reported to Herod, the governor of the province, as well as the very strange question they asked about the Birth of the Messiah. Fearful of his position and jealous of any event that might appear as a threat to displace him, this ruler sent for the chief priests and the Scribes to find out from them where this Messiah was to be born. After consulting the sacred books they informed him that Bethlehem of Judea was the place set apart for the Birth of the Child. Then during an audience with the Magi he said, concealing his wicked purpose of eventually putting the Child to death: "Go and diligently inquire after the Child; and when you have found Him bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him."

The Magi left him, and in an hour and a half were in Bethlehem making their obeisances to the Child King. How long the Magi remained there we do not know; but after they had seen and had been strengthened in divine faith, they returned with the message to their own people, avoiding in their journey Jerusalem and the crafty Herod.

The Virgin Mother went to the Temple to be purified forty days after the Birth of the divine Child, according to the provisions of the Jewish law, which are to be found in Leviticus, xii, 2-8. Mary submitted to the ceremony and offered the turtle doves of the poor; thus was she declared free from a stain which she had never incurred.

On her way out from the ceremony Our Lady encountered an old man who had long been hoping for this day and this visit. Under divine guidance he waited for the Mother and the Child. His eyes were opened; he saw, he understood. And then in their presence the venerable Simeon sang his song of dismissal which is now symbolic of last partings and farewells in the Christian liturgy.

“Now thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace;

“Because my eyes have seen Thy salvation,

“Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;

“A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.”

The news of the Birth of the Messiah had now gone abroad. The shepherds had been spreading it; the mysterious visit of the Magi had become known; Simeon and Anna had spoken about the Child everywhere they went. Herod kept in mind the three travelers who had asked where the Messiah was to be born, then went their way and did not return to him as he had requested. He was jealous of his power. The newborn Messiah might, indeed, be a king; might in the course of time gather a following and displace him. The idea of a spiritual kingdom and a spiritual rulership never entered into the calculations of this carnal-minded man. To remove any possibility of displacement, the vicious ruler determined upon a succession of cruel-

ties that stagger belief. A king might or might not have been born; where He lived and with whom were questions unsettled. So to make assurance doubly sure, Herod devised a dragnet of massacres which included every male child up to two years of age.

The murders of these innocent children were not isolated acts of iniquity in the reign of this king. They constituted a horrible climax to a long succession of crimes. Previous to this, the same Herod had murdered his priests and many of the great men of his kingdom; he had drowned his son-in-law, had slaughtered his sons, his uncles, his brother-in-law, many of his friends; he had killed his mother-in-law, and had strangled his wife, whom he loved after a wild fashion of his own. God, however, prevented his mad design against the divine Infant. "Arise," the angel of the Lord warned Joseph, "and take the Child and His Mother and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee." Joseph arose out of his sleep and fled with Mother and Child.

Egypt is about a ten days' journey from Bethlehem. Many pretty traditions about the hurried flight have come down to us: of palm trees that suddenly brought forth fruit and bent their branches to nourish the travelers; of dragons and leopards that came to adore the Child; of the statues of false gods that fell to earth and were broken. The Gospel narrative, however, is terse and stern and leaves us free to accept or reject these pious legends.

The holy couple were safely on their way, bearing with them their precious Charge, when Herod's brutal order was only too literally carried out. The prophecy of Jeremias, as St. Matthew reminds us, was thus fulfilled: "A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her

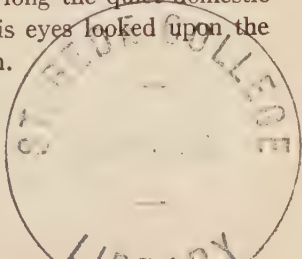
children, and would not be comforted, because they were not.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not known how long the Holy Family remained in Egypt. Herod died from a loathsome disease three months after Jesus was born; and after the death of Herod—just how soon after is not determined—the angel advised Joseph that he might return from exile with his Holy Charges. They were very happy to go back, no doubt; for in Egypt, whether they lived in ancient Cairo or elsewhere, they were among strangers and felt the lonesomeness of an enforced exile. They rejoiced, then, to hear the welcome words that they might return home.

Thus, in a divine way that had elements of the human in it, did God deliver the Child from the hatred of His enemies. Herod's persecution had borne him suddenly away from those scenes of divine manifestation which occurred at His Birth. After His departure the shepherds forgot the angel music and the light in the heavens and, perhaps, wondered if He were the true Messiah who had thus to flee before the wrath of His enemies. Simeon and Anna were dead; the Magi had gone back to their own country. Probably Bethlehem and all Judea beyond it had no longer very deep recollections of Jesus.

It was not to Jerusalem, the city of the Temple, that Jesus returned, nor to Jericho, the city of palms and roses, nor to Bethlehem, the city of the Birth eight miles away from the capital. No; in the divine plan He willed to be taken to Nazareth, the birthplace and home of Mary and Joseph. There, under the fostering care of His young Mother, His infant limbs waxed strong and His Child lips learned to frame articulate speech. There His ears heard all day long the quiet domestic murmurs of a peaceful people, and His eyes looked upon the not far-off, historic plains of Esdraelon.

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxxi, 15.



## SUGGESTIONS

Contrast the faith of Zachary (Luke i:5-25) with that of Mary (Luke i:26-38). Reread Luke i:46-56. This contains the Magnificat, which is sung at Vespers. St. Ambrose calls it the "Ecstasy of humility." It may be divided into three parts: (1) Mary thanks God for His mercies to her (46-50); (2) She proclaims God's favors to the humble (50-54); (3) The fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (54-56).

St. Luke's Gospel has more details on the Birth than the other Evangelists. St. Luke is supposed to have received his information from the Blessed Virgin.

Perhaps you noticed that after the incidents mentioned in Luke ii:4-51, St. Joseph is not mentioned any more.

The meaning of these names will interest you. Zachary means "Memorial of God"; Elizabeth, "Oath of God"; John, "Grace or mercy of God"; Mary, "Myrrh" or "Bitterness"; Jesus, "Saviour"; Bethlehem, "House of Bread."

Find Nazareth and Bethlehem on the map. Trace the route from one village to the other. Trace the Flight into Egypt as far as possible.

## STUDY TOPICS

1. What is meant by the words, "Be it done to me according to Thy word"?
2. Should the people of Bethlehem be considered inhospitable?
3. What is meant by the phrase, "This word that has come to pass"?
4. Was Mary obliged to obey the Jewish law of Purification?
5. What is meant by the words, "Nunc dimittis"?
6. What did Our Lord wish to teach us by the Flight into Egypt?

### III. HIDDEN LIFE

*The Town of Nazareth; Family Life; Life of Mary, Joseph, and the Child; Duties of Jewish Parents to the Child; Jesus Left in the Temple; The Return; Parents Realize He Is Lost; The Search; The Discovery; Mary's Words; The Child's Reply; Years of Jesus Were Rich and Fruitful; Physically Perfect; Increased in Human Learning; His Appreciation of the Visible World; Enjoyment of the Hidden Years. (Luke ii.)*

Nazareth awakens memories scarcely less tender than those of Jerusalem. It was there that Jesus lived the greater and more intimate part of His life. There, in the deeper silences of His great spiritual nature, He fitted Himself, humanly speaking, for His mission.

Nazareth was a quiet town. It was far removed from the more frequented highways that ran through Palestine, and was enticingly distant from the great centers of life. The houses were the usual type of Jewish dwelling: quadrangular in form, with an exterior stairway, a terrace of clay, and an upper room, or guest-chamber. Along the steep, ill-kept streets were scattered workshops, in which artisans plied their trades with somewhat imperfect tools. Forgers of iron, hemp carders, and wood fitters toiled uncomplainingly at their tasks. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, was somewhere among them.

In the evening families were accustomed to go out upon the terrace for friendly intercourse and later for prayers. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, when He was old enough, did so too. Their lowly dwelling, like the other houses, opened on the street side. At the entrance a few coarse tools hung from the walls, and others—perhaps the more delicate ones—were put away in



a tool chest. Mary no doubt worked around the house, preparing meals and attending to other domestic duties. The Child lay in His cradle, awake or asleep, restless or quiet, much like other infants. Often in the evening, when the foster father returned from his work, he found the Mother with the Child in her arms, and the sight touched him strangely.

According to Jewish custom, the Blessed Mother nursed her divine Infant for a period of two years. When He was weaned, following an age-long custom, friends and relatives came to congratulate her and to join in the modest feast that marked the occasion. The Jewish child, male or female, remained under the mother's care until its seventh year, when the father took the more direct part in educating and preparing a boy for his life work. No doubt this rule was followed in the home of the Holy Family. Of the boyhood of Jesus we know very little. We are sure He exemplified every virtue of youth in His life at home. He helped His foster father at the workbench, received that modest man's instructions, and performed little domestic tasks for His Mother.

Only one glimpse into His hiddenness is given in the Gospel story, and it is to be found in the second chapter of St. Luke. Every year at the feast of the Passover, the male representatives of all Jewish families went up to the Temple to take part in the religious ceremonies. This obligation began at the age of twelve. It may be observed that women were also free to take part in these pilgrimages. In compliance with the law, the Holy Family set out from Nazareth to Jerusalem. It was probably the same road which they had traversed twelve years before when the holy couple went to Bethlehem, and perhaps many of the same relatives and friends accompanied them.

They spent seven days in the Holy City. All the great memories of His race must have come to the divine Boy as He



went about the streets and into the synagogues; and especially when He witnessed the elaborate ceremonies that took place within the Temple. No doubt He saw over the years the procession of triumph, the waving of palms and olive branches that would greet Him; and the march of defeat before victory, when He would bear the cross along the sorrowful way.

The ceremonies had come to an end. Gradually the caravans that had come from far and near began their slow march out of the city. In this general home-going of pilgrims—some mounted, others on foot, some conversing, others silent or singing psalms to ask blessings on their journey—the presence or absence of Jesus was not noticed by His parents. They felt that He was somewhere among the caravans and experienced no anxiety. This explains why they traveled an entire day without missing Him. In the evening, after a journey of some twelve miles, the caravans halted. The pilgrims were counted, and Jesus was missing. Our own human nature will here help us to understand the feelings of Mary and Joseph, as hurriedly they made a search among their relatives and friends who belonged in the caravans. Jesus was nowhere among them. At daybreak with aching hearts they started back to Jerusalem, where they arrived toward evening. Whatever search they were able to make that night proved useless. The next day—the third after He was lost to them—they found Him in one of the synagogues adjoining the Temple, where the rabbis assembled to teach the law and the writings.

In the synagogue each master sat or stood behind a desk to answer questions which would serve at the same time as an exposition of law and religion. Usually these teachers tried to hold the attention of those who stood around by following out the method of question and answer. If the answer given was not satisfactory, the master gave his own solution. Some-

times, too, the onlookers were permitted to ask questions in order to stimulate interest and perhaps to afford the rabbi an opportunity to display his knowledge.

In such a group of listeners Mary and Joseph found Jesus. He was answering questions presented to Him by the rabbi and by other teachers brought from their places by the wonderful exposition which Jesus gave of doctrine and prophecy. The holy couple listened in respectful silence for a little while, forgetting their grief in the joy of discovery. Then maternal authority asserted itself and the Mother said in a mild tone of reproach: "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee, sorrowing." Mary spoke as a human mother to a human child. Jesus gently reminded her of His divine mission: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

And here the Evangelist draws the veil over a long period of eighteen years with the words: "And He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them. And His Mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men."

In a human sense these years formed the period of the growth of Jesus. He grew in grace—physical strength and beauty; in age, as other children; in wisdom, not the divine which could not be added to, but in human learning, in which He increased from day to day. Some thoughts on this three-fold development may profitably occupy us for a brief space.

As to advance in years in the life of Jesus little need be said. He who, as God was eternal, measured His human life by years. He lived the usual nine months in the womb of His mother; He experienced the helpless years of infancy; He passed through boyhood into the perfection of manhood. He did not live a long life, as we measure the normal life of man. He was only thirty-three years old when He was crucified for the

salvation of the human race. But in His case, as in the case of all, life is not measured so much by years as by the sacrifices we make, the services we render, the degree of personal perfection we reach. The years of Our Lord were relatively few, but they were rich and full.

Jesus was a physically perfect man; and no doubt His childhood was characterized by health and vigor. True, certain early Christian writers tell us that Our Lord was low of stature and of an unpleasant exterior, but St. Jerome and St. John Chrysostom assert the contrary. He probably followed the trade of His foster father until He was ready to begin His public life. The physical exercise at the workbench developed and strengthened an already healthy body. Yet the work was not in the open; nor was it severe enough to roughen His features nor to stunt His physical growth.

So then for eighteen years did Jesus, in the terse words of St. Luke, "grow in grace," working at a humble trade. What a consolation for all those who, in the sweat of their face, eat bread, that the Son of God deemed it not beneath Him to work with His hands! And what a reproach to all those who consider themselves in disgrace unless they reach positions beyond the grime and dust of factory or workshop! Jesus in this example of His life proves that no task is menial to which we take obedience and industry; that man gives dignity to service; that the lowest thing done worthily is high; that the highest, if we take to it unholy motives, becomes low.

As man, Jesus increased in human learning. In His childhood Mary taught Him those elemental lessons which mothers are somehow peculiarly fitted to teach. From Joseph He learned how to use the carpenter's tools, and whatever else came within the scope of what the Jewish father was expected to teach his son. As He advanced in age, then, He advanced in knowledge. He passed through the years of childhood; He

merged into boyhood and took in the more complicated learning of the schools. In His young manhood He was a close observer of nature—the manifold things of the growing world—as His parables plainly show. He enjoyed creation as poet and seer enjoy it, because it is beautiful and good—a gift of God. The sun that set beyond the peaks of Carmel, the winds that blew down from Lebanon, the harvest fields bending and yellow, the lilies clothed in splendor beyond the splendor of Solomon, the buzz of bees at drowsy noontide, and the stir of insects below long spears of grass—all appealed to Him for their own sake, and more for the infinite wisdom that fashioned and preserved them.

We leave Jesus in His happy seclusion at Nazareth with Mary and Joseph and His cousins James, Jude, and Simon. The years run their quiet, uneventful way, while He communes with His Father and prepares Himself for the great work. He enjoys to the fullest these happy days, when there are peace and great silences and the softer music of restful human voices. These years, all too brief, will come to an end all too quickly. Then He will bid good-by to Nazareth and betake Himself to the desert, there in fasting and prayer to fit Himself for the great task.

#### SUGGESTIONS

Knowledge and love grow together, and one is the measure of the other. Were we to study five minutes daily the record of those blessed three-and-thirty years, we should find a change for the better in our relations with Him before many months were past. Mass and Communion and Benediction and Visits to Him in the Blessed Sacrament would be different. Faith, Hope, and Charity would take quite a new development in our souls; we should begin to say to ourselves in joyful surprise: "*I know in Whom I have Believed*" (II Timothy i).—Mother Loyola, *Heavenwards*, p. 116.

In connection with Luke ii:41-50 consider these thoughts:

The law ordered all men to go to Jerusalem three times a year to keep the feast of the Pasch (Passover—same time as our Easter); Pentecost—fifty days after the second day of the Passover; and Tabernacles—about the end of September. Women were not obliged to go. Boys of twelve were bound to fast and observe the law in all things. (Jesus was twelve at the time. It was on this pilgrimage that He was lost and found in the Temple with the Doctors.)

As men and women traveled in separate companies, St. Joseph thought that Jesus was with the Blessed Virgin; while she thought He was with St. Joseph. It was not until they halted that they discovered their mistake.

This loss of Jesus was one of His Mother's great sorrows.

"How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke ii:49.) This, the first of Christ's statements that we have, expresses His Divine Sonship and the object of His mission on earth. The next verse reveals the fact that although St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin knew the divine nature of Jesus, His mission was only gradually revealed to them.

The flocking to Jerusalem of so many visitors at these feasts (Luke ii:41-50) gives the sense of national unity described in Psalms cxxxii.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. State the difference in position between the Jewish father and mother toward the child.
2. Why was it that by asking questions the synagogue masters could hold attention?
3. Do you think it strange that Jesus acted as He did at Jerusalem? Give your reasons.
4. What is the advantage of meditating on the Hidden Life of Christ?
5. What do you think of Christ's home life?
6. What virtues does Christ in His Boyhood teach us?

#### IV. MESSIAH AND PRECURSOR

*John the Baptist; Personality of John; His Preaching; His Retirement into the Desert; His Baptizing and Preaching; Along the Jordan; His Stern Doctrines; His Testimony to Jesus; "I Am Not the Christ"; Baptism of Jesus by John; Testimony of the Eternal Father; Jesus in the Desert; Temptations and Triumphs; How Satan Appeared; Jesus Ministered to by Angels. (Matt. iii; Mark i; Luke iii; John i; Matt. iv.)*

John, generally distinguished as the Baptist, is a striking personality that may well occupy our thoughts before the great Figure of the Redeemer appears upon the scene. Christ had not reached His thirtieth year when John was in the desert preaching penance and Baptism and preparing the minds and hearts of the people for the coming of the Messiah. This son of Zachary and Elizabeth was a man of Judea whose doctrine was as stern as his dress. Like the ancient prophets he wore a garment of camel's hair upon his shoulders, and about his loins a girdle of leather. He drank no wine and lived upon the simplest fare—locusts and wild honey. He was, in truth, a rugged figure that startled men out of their indifference with his gospel of penance and preparation. Fill up the valleys, pull down the hills, make straight the ways that are crooked, was his challenge.

After the Baptist had reached manhood he retired into the solitude of the desert to meditate on the words of the prophets, on their announcements and inspired warnings. The desert into which John entered was a lonely stretch of barren land covering several leagues that lay along the western side of the Dead Sea. A few trees here and there spread out their lan-



guishing branches, and from the distance came the cries of birds of prey and the roarings of wild beasts.

Into one of the caverns, hewn out of the rocks by the forces of nature, John withdrew when the weather was inclement. There, all alone, he heard the voices of the past, which came to him with inspiration to preach his mighty message of the near coming of the Messiah.

Then, when the hour came, he emerged from his retreat and set out for the Jordan where it empties into the Dead Sea. There he began his preaching, and gave Baptism as a sign of the remission of sin. His doctrine was stern and uncompromising; his language unmistakably direct. "Ye offspring of vipers, who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of penance, and do not begin to say, 'We have Abraham for our father.' For I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire."

The Baptist, as does the Messiah whom he announces, takes his tropes from the life with which all his hearers are familiar. The viper that lay concealed below the grass of the desert, out of which John had just come, suggested itself at once to his imagination; and the application must have appealed forcibly to his hearers. The viper casts its venom over herbage and flowers and destroys life. So the hypocrite, who comes to ask for Baptism without true repentance, poisons by bad example the wholesome spiritual growth of those with whom he comes in contact. In their pride of opinion, their arrogance, their age-long boast that they are children of Abraham, these Jews whom he addresses may think they are essential in the scheme of things. Not so. Again at his feet the Precursor finds the

terms of his imagery. God needs no man or group of men or race of people in His creation. "For I say unto you that God is able out of these stones to raise up children to Abraham." How often in fact have we not seen that, when a race of people begins to assume an attitude of essential importance in the world of affairs, there takes place an accounting, and this attitude of essentiality collapses. And does it not happen also that just when we consider ourselves most important to the accomplishment of any service, we can even then be most readily set aside and the work we are doing will suffer no setback?

"For now the ax is laid to the root of the trees." The trees must bear fruit—repentance, renewal, restoration—or they will be cut down. Among the first fruits of faith is a new standard of conduct. Not by crying "Lord, Lord" are men to possess the Kingdom. They must grow and produce good works. If not, the alternative is not to be resisted. "Every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire."

As was to be expected, this language proved offensive to the Pharisees, who considered themselves above any such reproaches. Hence many of them withdrew from the leadership of the Baptist; and others, not of the Pharisees, asked him humbly: "What, then, shall we do?" John answered: "He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do in like manner." The tax-gatherers went to him and asked: "Master, what shall we do?" John gave the answer: "Do nothing more than that which is appointed you." In other words: obey the law; do not overtax or cheat. To the soldiers of Herod Antipas he said: "Do violence to no man, neither calumniate any man, and be content with your pay."

Then came the great test. The fame of John had spread from day to day until people began to wonder if he were not himself the Messiah. But the Baptist gave a direct answer, without any attempt at concealment or evasion, as to his person and mission. "I indeed baptize you in water unto penance; but He that shall come after me is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose. He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire." To the deputation from the Sanhedrin he was equally direct. "Who art thou?" he was asked. His answer was unmistakable. "I am not the Christ." They pursued their inquiry. "Art thou Elias?" "I am not." "Art thou the prophet?" "No." They persisted. "Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us?" He replied with touching humility: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as said the prophet Isaias." John's tribute to his Master, which sets aside any claims of Messiahship the Jews might have entertained about him, is one of the most striking examples of self-effacement in the entire Gospel narrative. At his greatest moment, when he had a following and influence, the Precursor, recognizing his subordinate position, stepped aside to make way for the Redeemer. "I baptize with water; but there hath stood One in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose."

In the language of John, as in the language of Jesus, there is no evidence of what may be called high learning. The terminology is not obscure, there is no appearance of painful searching after the elegances of diction, none of the purple and finery of language on parade. Simplicity and a modest rhetoric are everywhere. There is often an unmistakable directness. "Art thou Elias?" "I am not." "Art thou the prophet?" "No."

"Who art thou?" "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as said the prophet Isaías." "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" is a felicitous, comprehensive phrase which gives the true inwardness of the Baptist's mission.

One day while the Precursor was baptizing where the Jordan enters the Dead Sea, a Man some thirty years of age came to him. He was tall and slender and carried Himself with quiet dignity. His face was serious, His eyes gentle, His voice low and singularly sweet. He was none other than Jesus Christ come up from Nazareth to be baptized by John. The Precursor recognized his King, with whom he conversed in quiet tones away from the crowd. At length Our Lord asked John to baptize Him. "I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?" John protested humbly. "Suffer it to be so now," was the reply of the Saviour, "for so it becometh us to fulfill all justice." Jesus then entered the river, John baptized Him, and the spirit of God descended in the form of a dove and rested on the head of the Messiah. Then spoke the voice of the Eternal Father: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Probably this divine manifestation was perceived only by the Redeemer and the Precursor and was not granted to the onlookers. Then these two friends, almost of the same age, bade each other good-by at the river bank. John continued his work of preaching a little while longer, until he received his crown of martyrdom at the hands of Herod. Christ departed for the desert to prepare Himself for three years of arduous public life, which ended with His Death on the Cross.

In this desert which He now entered Jesus spent forty days in order to fit Himself by fasting and prayer for His great work. It was the same wilderness out of which John had just come—a mountainous, uninhabited land running north and

south along the western slope of the Dead Sea. On the one side, unrelieved by any sign of wholesome vegetation, were immense sand hills, yellow and irregular. On the other, rocky peaks, bleak and sinister and of appalling desolation, reached out over dried-up torrent beds.

Here the Man of Sorrows came to fortify Himself for the work of redeeming the world. What thoughts were His during these great days of preparation! He saw across the ages, past and future, the world unredeemed since Adam's fall, the world of His day and all coming ages to be redeemed by suffering and the Cross!

Toward the end of the long fast and retreat, Satan, the arch enemy, appeared in the guise of a benefactor. Jesus was physically weak after His period of fasting and, not unnaturally, the tempter's first point of attack was this condition of physical weakness. Our Lord was hungry after having abstained for so extended a period from all food except what was absolutely necessary to sustain life. He needed the bread which was not to be found in the desert. Why not procure Himself this food by working His first miracle? "Command that these stones be made bread," suggested Satan. It seemed a harmless suggestion. Jesus, however, who Himself had no sins to suffer for or to expiate, came to suffer for and to expiate the sins of others. All His miracles were to be wrought for the benefit of others, not for His own benefit. He set aside, therefore, the suggestion of the tempter in a very direct, simple pronouncement. "It is written: 'Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.'"

It is useless to attempt to secure a dispensation from the Messiah in His own behalf. Satan cannot persuade Him that He is not a man among men; instead of using His Messianic prerogative for His own benefit, Jesus prefers to forget that

He is possessed of it, and bows humbly beneath the hand of the Eternal Father. He would be as other men under like circumstances. Moreover, has He not come to teach the lessons of abnegation and mortification? And at what more fitting time than at the outset of His career can He teach by example the lessons of self-denial?

The temptation itself seems trivial; unworthy, if one may so speak, of the cunning and foresight of the subtle demon. The suggestion that the Saviour work a miracle by changing stones into bread to satisfy mere appetite, when He could have procured food in some other way, is such as might arise from the intellect of a primitive story-maker. Surely the Son of God, who went out into the desert to do voluntary penance, is not so given to the satisfaction of appetite that He cannot wait, if need be, the arrival of food through the ordinary channels of human relationships.

Seeing the uselessness of trying to win the consent of Jesus to work a miracle in order to gratify a purely physical want, Satan changed his point of attack. He took the Messiah to the pinnacle of the Temple. Below them the brook of Cedron made a deep chasm through the hard earth. If Jesus, just at the outset of His career, were to leap off and sustain Himself aloft, it would be a marvel to startle the entire city. Humanly speaking, it would set His name before all Judea and perhaps win Him thousands of converts. Satan said to Him: "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down, for it is written: 'He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.'"<sup>1</sup> Satan asked for a miracle which would be useless, vain, and quite beside the divine plan of Redemption.

God does, indeed, give angels to His faithful children and

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. xc: 11-12.



followers, so that they may pass safely through dangers and pressing obstacles with the help of these heavenly spirits. In the Old Testament we find examples of this angelic guardianship and ministration. The prayers of Tobias and Sara were heard as the angel Raphael brought them comfort; an angel saved Abraham from the sorrow of killing his son; an angel foretold to Manue's wife the birth of Samson.

The Saviour Himself will be visited by angels when He has come forth triumphant over the demon in this very contest which He is now waging; angels will come to Him bringing rest and comfort in His hours of depression where He lies prone among the olive trees. God always sustains His martyrs, His confessors, His faithful servants, in times of great trial. But this is not a case in point.

Our Lord did not come upon the earth to exhibit Himself as a performer of amazing feats. To conceive that He would consent to offer Himself as a showman to win the admiration of Jerusalem or even to gain a following is to set a very low valuation on His mission. The world must be converted and saved; but it must be converted and saved according to the divine plan, through the influx of grace on a redeemed soul which is gifted with a mind to understand and accept, and with a will to choose. The divine is wrought out in ways that often have all the appearances of the human. This is true of the time of the Saviour, true all through the history of the Church, true of the time in which we live. It is an answer to the question so often asked by many, so often formulated in our own minds: Why does not God manifest more unmistakably His power, the power of His Church, in the affairs of the world? The laws of nature, of causation, of reaping the harvest of what we sow, are the normal conditions of this world of ours and are not to be changed for every need that arises.

Hence to Satan's suggestion, Jesus answered promptly: "It is written again: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'"

The devil made a third assault. He led the Saviour to a very high mountain, where he brought before Him all the riches and power of the kingdoms of earth; then after Christ had seen their tempting beauty, Satan said: "All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me." Jesus, who came to choose poverty and shame and suffering, not riches, honors, and pleasures, asserted His mastery and cried out: "Begone, Satan, for it is written: 'The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.'"

Thus did Christ triumph signally over Satan in their first contest of His career. Neither the suggestion to sense gratification by an appeal to appetite, nor the suggestion to vanity by the display of power over the forces of nature, nor the presentation of honors and riches through the visions of the kingdoms of earth could turn His thoughts from the divine plan of redeeming the human race by mortification, humility, poverty, suffering, and death. "Learn of Me," He will say later on, "because I am meek and humble of heart." In this threefold trial and triumph He teaches us how to meet and to overthrow the cunning and insistence of the arch-deceiver.

There is division of opinion among ecclesiastical writers as to the form in which Satan appeared to Christ. Very many accept the Gospel narrative literally. That is to say, the tempter appeared physically before Our Lord and presented to Him, in the order named, the objects of the temptations. Specifically, Satan showed Him the stones, took Him to one of the pinnacles of the Temple, and finally transported Him to the mountain for the purpose of showing Him the glories of all the kingdoms of the earth. Other writers—Origen and St. Cyprian among them—hold the opinion that Satan was invisible and the tempta-

tions came by suggestion. In other words, the struggle was in a sphere purely spiritual. Of course, there is no doubt as to the reality of the struggle. The division of opinion is purely as to the manner in which the tempter and the objects of the temptation appeared, not as to their actuality.

His victory assured, angels came to honor and comfort Jesus, who took upon Himself our humanity, which He glorified then, and which He will glorify again and again after He has entered upon His public life.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Are there men today who live as John the Baptist lived? If there are, what is their motive?
2. Of what value was St. John's retirement to him? Do you know of any other great saint who profited by withdrawing from the world for meditation and prayer?
3. Which quality of St. John's character would you wish to have for yourself?
4. Was it necessary for Christ to be baptized? Why did He desire Baptism?
5. Why did Jesus permit the devil to tempt Him?
6. Contrast the methods the devil used in tempting Our Lord with those used in tempting us.
7. How do you think the devil appeared to Our Lord?
8. Do you think that John the Baptist was tempted?
9. What benefits are to be gained from meditating on the manner in which John the Baptist humbled himself for the greater glory of Christ?

## V. JESUS SELECTS HIS FIRST APOSTLES. CANA AND JERUSALEM

*"Behold the Lamb of God"; Calling of John and Andrew; Simon Is Called Cephas; Philip and Nathanael Are Called to Apostleship; Marriage Feast of Cana; Wine Gives Out; Miracle of Changing Water into Wine; This First Miracle a Tribute to the Blessed Mother; Saviour Visits Jerusalem for the Paschal Feast; Drives Out the Traffickers; Jews Demand a Sign; "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"; Nicodemus Comes to Him by Night; Discourse to Nicodemus; Future Attitude of Nicodemus; He Remained a Faithful Follower. (John i, ii, iii.)*

Christ finished His preparation in the desert while John continued his work of announcing the Messiah to the people. As the Saviour passed along the bank of the Jordan, shortly after His period of solitude, the Baptist called out to those whom he was instructing, "Behold the Lamb of God!" When two men who had been listening followed with their eyes the direction indicated by his hand, they saw Jesus walking past and hurried after Him. He turned around as He heard them approach, and looked kindly at them when they hesitated. Then He asked with His wonted gentleness: "What seek ye?" They in turn asked: "Master, where dwellest Thou?" It was John, later to be called the beloved disciple, who asked the question, and his companion was Andrew. Jesus said to them: "Come and see." They went, though where is not recorded. Perhaps back to some cave in the desert which the Lord had not left finally; perhaps to the home of some friend. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when the two men went with Him, and they remained at His side the rest of the day.

There is no record of any conversation during this eventful visit. No doubt as a result of what they had heard from the lips of Jesus, John and Andrew learned that despite His seemingly humble state and quiet manner, this Man of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah foretold by the prophets, announced by John the Baptist, and long looked for by all the children of Israel. Next day the two future Apostles went to tell their brothers the glad news that they had found the Messiah. "We have found the Messiah," said Andrew to Simon; whereupon Simon went straightway to the Redeemer.

It was evening when he appeared before the youthful Master. The Saviour looked long and tenderly at the strong-featured, roughly-clad Galilean fisherman, whose face was tanned from the Syrian sun and the lake winds, and said with authority: "Thou art Simon, the Son of Jonas; hereafter thou shalt be called Cephas"—meaning rock, or more properly, a portion of a rock.

The day following, Jesus returned to Galilee and on the journey met Philip of Bethsaida conversing with Andrew and Simon, his countrymen. "Follow Me," Christ invited. Philip accepted the invitation. Nathanael of Cana, returning to his own village after having heard John at the Jordan, was overtaken by Philip. "We have found Him," said Philip, "of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth." In reality Jesus was neither a Nazarene nor the son of Joseph, but Philip was speaking according to the general opinion held by the Jews, many of whom did not know that the Messiah was born in Bethlehem, as the prophets had foretold, and that Joseph was only His foster father. Nor did the name of Nazareth call up a wealth of memories to Nathanael. It was, in truth, a small market town with a reputation somewhat unsavory; and so he asked with

unconscious irony, "Can anything of good come out of Nazareth?" When Philip answered very simply, "Come and see," they went on together. As the Saviour saw Nathanael coming, He addressed to the future Apostle this short eulogy so full of suggestion: "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile." "Whence knowest Thou me?" Nathanael cried out in astonishment. Jesus answered, prophet-like: "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." Nathanael received the grace of recognition immediately: "Master, Thou art the Son of God. Thou art the King of Israel." The Saviour then completed his conversion with an affirmation and a prophecy: "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, thou believest. Greater things than these shalt thou see. Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

In all, Christ has now five disciples: Andrew; John, the beloved disciple; Simon, the future Peter; Philip; and Nathanael, the future Bartholomew. As yet, however, these men have not left their occupations or their families, though the time will come when they shall be asked to leave father, mother, wife, children, and all else for the Master's sake.

After reaching home, Jesus received notice of a marriage feast going on in Cana, a small town some miles from Lake Genesareth. The groom was a near relative of the Blessed Virgin, who had already gone to the feast; so Jesus accepted the invitation which had been extended to Him. He did so, doubtless, as an act of gracious courtesy to His Blessed Mother, and also, perhaps, that He might have an opportunity to make known the peaceful object of His divine mission.

The journey from Nazareth to Cana took the Master and the five disciples who accompanied Him about five hours to



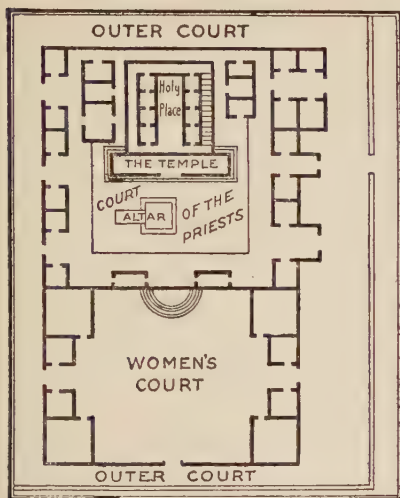
complete, but as these marriage festivities extended over several days, it was not noticeable that the company was late. The coming of the distinguished Guest had, we may be sure, the effect of quickening enthusiasm among those gathered together to celebrate the happy event.

During the course of the long evening the wine gave out, a circumstance which was due, no doubt, to the very great number of persons present. Nor was the occurrence particularly noted, though of course there was evident concern in the families of the newly-married couple. The Blessed Mother, with a woman's keen insight, observed the embarrassment of the hosts, and went quietly to her divine Son, saying gently: "They have no wine." Jesus knew at once the meaning of the suggestion, but answered coldly: "Woman, what is that to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come." Although it may seem there is a suggestion of reproof in the reply, as if the Blessed Mother should not have asked Him to work a miracle for the benefit of her relatives, or at any rate before the time set for Him to appear as a miracle-worker, yet it would seem that the Blessed Virgin assumed her divine Son would act according to her desires. There is confidence, and no suggestion of wounded feelings, in her instruction to the servants: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."

Nearby stood six water-pots of stone for the accustomed purification of the Jews. Each of these vessels held, perhaps, six gallons. Presently Jesus said to the servants: "Fill the water-pots with water." They obeyed, and scarcely had they accomplished the task when the water became wine. At the banquets of the well-to-do, as in this instance, there was a chief steward whose duty it was to direct the servants and waiters and to see to the orderly distribution of food and beverages. He did not sit at table with the guests, but

took care that their wants were promptly supplied. It was to the chief steward the waiters went when there was a shortage, or a threatened shortage, of food or drink. To him accordingly they went when the wine gave out; to him they went when the water in the jars was miraculously changed into wine. After he had tasted the new liquor he gave it official approval. Then calling the bridegroom, he said to him with surprise at his reversal of the traditional order of serving the wines: "Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now." There is nothing in the Gospel to indicate that the guests noticed this miraculous appearance of the wine. Perhaps they were too preoccupied or too boisterous to observe, or too carefree to be concerned. Their wants were supplied, and in the exhilaration of the time they forgot all else. But the Mother of Jesus, at whose behest the miracle was wrought, knew and remembered and carried the thought of this great kindness of her dear Son always in her heart. And well she might. It was accomplished in response to her wish and was an implied tribute of great devotion, that her Son so readily complied with her request, even though the time for the accomplishment of His miracles had not yet come.

After the wedding Jesus, accompanied by His Mother and the disciples, went to Capharnaum, a town on the northwest slope of Lake Genesareth, where He remained some days as the guest of Simon, the future head of His Church. The spring of the year had come, and with it the Paschal season. The Saviour accordingly left for Jerusalem, joined by His little company, in order to celebrate the Pasch at the Holy City. It was fitting that Our Lord should begin His public life there; and on His first appearance He gave a striking example of His authority. The house of God had become a market place, a



PLAN OF HEROD'S TEMPLE

center of bargain and exchange. In the outer court of the Temple, which was set apart for the worshiping of the Gentiles, the priests had given permission for a market place to be set up. Under the high cedar roof, on the bright flagstones, merchants and money changers were seated between the marble columns. There they sold incense, oil, wine, and salt—all needed for the sacrifices. But, in addition, the custom had

grown to the abuse of disposing for sale victims to be offered. As a result, there was the confused roaring of beasts intermingled with the noisy cries of avaricious speculators making an unholy din in the Temple of God. Jesus felt indignant at this desecration, and at once His eyes shone with brilliance, and His voice rang out with holy anger: "My Father's house is a house of prayer, and you have made it a den of thieves." Armed with a scourge of cords roughly held together, He drove out the merchants, the oxen, and the sheep; He threw down the tables and scattered the money over the floor. Those of the poorer class, who sold pigeons, He treated with less severity. "Take these things hence," He ordered, "and make not My Father's house a house of traffic."

The more influential Jews who had been witnessing the Saviour's summary expulsion of the money changers, felt that

He was overstepping His authority. They began at once to object. "What sign dost Thou show unto us, seeing that Thou dost these things?" they demanded. Jesus replied in language they did not understand. "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise It up." Understanding His words only in their literal meaning, they cried out with indignation: "Six and forty years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou raise it up in three days?" The Saviour made no answer, perhaps because the minds of His questioners were in no disposition to receive the explanation. They were the party in opposition to whom no enlightenment from Jesus was acceptable. However, they kept His words in memory and recalled them as an accusation against Him at a later date.

We are not told how long Our Lord remained in Jerusalem. It is of interest, however, to note that it was on the occasion of this visit that the influential leader Nicodemus came to Him by night. This aristocratic Pharisee asked Him a number of questions which Our Lord answered. "Rabbi, we know that Thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which Thou dost, unless God be with him." Jesus at once turned to the question of Baptism. "Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Nicodemus took the words literally, a practice which became so general with the Pharisees in their conflicts with Jesus. "How," he asked, "can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born again?"

In His answer Jesus refers directly to Baptism. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Then, so as further to enlighten this Pharisee, He added: "Wonder not that I said to thee: thou must be born again. The Spirit breatheth where He will; and thou hearest His

voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus, still not understanding, asked: "How can these things be done?" The words of Jesus in reply have in them the elements of irony and mild rebuke: "Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things? Amen, amen, I say to thee that we speak what we know and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony." The unwillingness of the Pharisees to hear the truth of Jesus was indeed the cause of their condemnation and final rejection.

In the discourse which follows, the Saviour affirms that truth, wisdom, and certitude in religion come from Him and are to be deposited in the Church which He is to found. He, and the Church through Him, are the exponents of divine Faith. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, we speak what we know and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony." The Saviour here represents His nascent Church and speaks in the name of all His faithful followers through the ages. He points out the unreceptive attitude of the Jews toward His divine teaching—an attitude that is to become more pronounced as the months go on. When they show an unwillingness to accept less difficult truths which do not call for so heroic a faith, how will they accept truths that go beyond all the confines of human speculation? "If I have spoken to you earthly things and you believe not, how will you believe if I shall speak to you heavenly things?" The Pharisee is silent, perhaps awed in humble submission. Jesus speaks of Redemption and of the final disposition of those who believe. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." This supreme sacrifice of Redemption is called forth by love—God's love for man. "For God," explains the



divine Teacher, "so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." The mercies of God—the God of whom Jesus is the Eternal Son—are boundless, and the Eternal Son is sent to save the world and not to enter into judgment against it. "For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him." Belief in Jesus as the Son of God is a condition of salvation. "He that believeth in Him is not judged. But he that doth not believe is already judged, because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Believers and the righteous love the light; unbelievers and sinners seek darkness. "For everyone that doth evil hateth the light and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved. But he that doth truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God."

At the conclusion of the sublime discourse with which the Pharisee was favored, Nicodemus took leave of Jesus. Though nothing is said of the impression left upon his mind we may well believe he went away touched by divine grace. So far as we can learn, he did not make any public profession of his faith. Yet he said at a later date certain kind words before the Sanhedrin in order to save the life of the Saviour; and at the Death he claimed the body of Jesus from His enemies, and assisted at the Burial.

From the brief Gospel presentation given us of Nicodemus we may be inclined to conclude that he was a man without any great penetration of mind or notable force of character. Yet, perhaps, because he says so little and appears for so brief a space, such an estimate of the man is not altogether just. There is, too, an humbleness of manner, a certain diffidence of language when speaking to the Saviour which we may



readily mistake for weakness. And probably it was this humility in act and speech which merited for him, later, conversion and salvation. For we cannot well conceive the Saviour's giving so lengthy and so instructive a discourse to any individual, without at the same time bringing the seed of this word to bear fruit.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. What is peculiar about the calling of St. John and St. Andrew?
2. Why did Christ change Simon's name?
3. Does it seem in keeping with Our Lord's life that He should have attended the marriage feast?
4. Why was it fitting that Our Lord should begin His public life at Jerusalem?
5. Justify Our Lord's consideration for the poorer classes. Were not all guilty of the same crime?
6. Can you think of any reason why Our Lord should answer the Jews in language they could not understand?
7. Should we go to Christ as Nicodemus did? What class of people in this age resemble Nicodemus?
8. How do you explain Nicodemus's inability to understand the words of Christ?
9. In what respect do you admire Nicodemus?
10. What do you think was the result of the conversation and instruction?

## VI. JESUS: LEADER, TEACHER

*His Perfect Humanity; As Man, Jesus Calls Forth Loyalties of Men; Exaltation of Humanity Is Not a Minimizing of Divinity; His Power of Leadership; He Dominated; Won Love and Confidence of Men; His Human Kindness; His Mercy; His Tolerance; Appealingly Brave; Attitude toward His Enemies; Jesus the Teacher; Enlightens; Inspires; His Thought; Three Types of Parables; Figures of Speech; Similes; Metaphors; Antitheses; Sublime Yet Simple; Though Acknowledging No Master, He Is Possessor of the Gifts of All Masters.*

Jesus by divine condescension exalted humanity; the humanity of the Saviour is humanity made perfect. Much of the loveliness we discover in Jesus, in what He says, in what He does, comes to us from our contacts with Him through the Gospel narratives. The Evangelists give us the story of His human life, with its record of love and mercy, of teachings and divine manifestations. Although the outpourings of those detached saints who loved God as seraphs do, unfold to us the meaning of divine love, nevertheless, it is as Man that Jesus calls forth the enthusiasms and the loyalties of men. It was as Man He came to save, it was as Man He lived thirty-three years of earthly life, as Man He suffered and died. Needless to say this exaltation of His humanity is not a minimizing of His divinity, for once we recognize Jesus as the Son of God, it will be difficult to super-exalt His human nature.

By virtue of His marvelous personality Jesus was the possessor of all those gifts that make leadership inescapable. For we know there is a natural leadership, just as there is a leadership that is delegated. And it will happen sometimes that the

chosen leader is not conceded the gifts of premiership by nature; but never is one whom nature so endows without his following, without his domination.

Jesus was a natural leader. In any age of the world He would have a great following; in any age His thought would influence and alter the lives of men. He could not escape a position of power once He mingled with mankind. Apart altogether from the divine plan, the insistent opposition of the influential enemies that followed His every movement—misinterpreted His every action, tried to give a wrong turn to every word He spoke—was all due to jealousy over His unmistakable influence, His power over men.

Jesus, let us repeat, had all the qualities that force one into leadership. He inspired and He dominated. Moreover, He won the love and the confidence of men, so that His word became a law for His followers. He had that human kindness which always wins hearts, unless they are too hardened by malice or hate. He was long-suffering and left the door of return always open to the sinner.

He could say to His chief Apostle, with the morning of the denial still fresh in memory: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" He not only aimed to make the question an occasion to confer the primacy upon His Apostle, but He wished the repentant Peter to know that He still cherished for him the same kindly, loving thoughts of the earlier ministrations. Even Judas might have gone back again to the divine embrace, cleansed and forgiven, had he but heeded those last unmistakable invitations to mercy: "Friend, whereto art thou come?" "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss!" His spirit was large and merciful. The woman taken in adultery was pardoned, her accusers were put to rout; Mary Magdalen, who in her grief and shame for accumulated sins

was spurned by all the guests at that feast of Simon the Pharisee, was lifted up and forgiven forever by the Master. The lepers who came along the road crying out their doom He cleansed and sent away; and the blind beggars who called for His mercy were heard above all those triumphant greetings when He passed through Jericho on His way to Jerusalem.

Jesus was tolerant. He preached the spirit rather than the letter of the law. He set charity above mere legal niceties of observance. He had no hesitation in curing the sick on the Sabbath even though Pharisaical regulation forbade and Pharisaical conscience appeared outraged. He had ample reasons to justify this largeness of spirit. The Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath, He told His critics. He exposed the inconsistency of those who objected to His alleviating human affliction on the Sabbath by pointing out that they themselves did not hesitate on that day to bring relief to the beasts of the field.

Christ was appealingly brave. Weak characters assume a bravery that is histrionic and noisy and follows like a feather the drift of the wind. True bravery is modest and quiet-appearing, and when unmistakably set in truth, immovable. Surrender, however, is not synonymous with cowardice. Sometimes surrender is a very brave thing. It becomes heroic when retreat or retirement means self-effacement for the sake of enduring adjustments. Christ could not surrender because He was unchanging Truth.

Yet even He, for our profit, could seem to turn aside. The woman of Canaan affords a case in point. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David! My daughter is grievously troubled by a devil!" He who had so often heeded the call for mercy was silent now. The disciples, in order to be rid of the troublesome petitioner, offered a ready suggestion: "Send

her away, for she crieth after us." His first words were not such as to inspire hope. "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel." This woman was not to be set aside so easily, however, as Jesus well knew. "Lord, help me!" It was a cry, not an argument, for mercy. The answer was crushing: "It is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs." From the ground below the table where the metaphor put her, she replied in a metaphor that placed her lower yet: "Yea, Lord: for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters." Humility triumphed in this endurance test of faith. "O woman, great is thy faith. Be it done to thee as thou wilt." This was surrender, in so far as Jesus could surrender, for our instruction. It was surrender to a cry from the dust, which a weak representative of power might not be willing to make.

On the other hand there is no suggestion at all of concession when the Saviour meets the opposition of His enemies. They are hypocrites, formalists, traffickers in holy office, casuists. Between Him and them there is no approach. Alone in His struggle against them, He is fearless in pulling down their sophistries, tireless in setting up the edifice of eternal truth. He can yield to the cry of a poor descendant of the Syro-Phoenicians, because concession is mercy; He never yields to the insistent quibbling, the insidious flattery, the sanctimonious protests, the dilemmas and the sophistries of the Scribes and the Pharisees, because concession would mean the defeat of truth.

Jesus as a Teacher has all those gifts that enlighten and inspire. He does not dogmatize; He is not speculative. He states a general truth and expands it by a parable or by certain facts of which that truth is the summation. Thus He sets down this general truth about the Scribes and Pharisees: "All

things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not; for they say and do not." Generalization ceases here, and the thought is advanced by very definite facts. "For they bind heavy and unsupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders, but with a finger of their own they will not move them." Again the general condemnation, "And all their works they do to be seen of men," is developed by concrete instances. "For they make their phylacteries broad and enlarge their fringes. And they love the first places at feasts and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market place, and to be called by men, Rabbi."

The parables give artistic concealment to some of the sublimest truths of the great Teacher. They are of varying lengths, and the allegorical terms are not always completely hidden. In the Prodigal Son, which seems a transcript from life, the spiritual application is suppressed. The hearers will find out for themselves who are the prototypes of the patient and merciful father and his ungrateful, spendthrift son. Truth discovered brings with it the joy of discovery. Other parables give partial revealment. Thus in the Fold and the Shepherd, Jesus announces that He Himself is the Door and the Shepherd. "I am the Door. By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved . . . I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep." In yet a third type, the Sower and the Seed, for example, we have detailed exposition of the life out of which the parable is taken, as well as its spiritual application.

As a teacher of divine things, Jesus did not despise any of those natural ornaments that clarify and strengthen and beautify expression. His language abounds in tropes. "For as lightning that lighteneth from under heaven, so shall the Son



of Man be in His day." "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter and shall not be able." "I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" Antithesis adds force to truth; and Jesus the Teacher often makes use of this form of contrast. "Everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is come to life again; he was lost, and is found." "I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just that need not penance."

In Christ's teaching, simplicity becomes sublimity. Of His miracles it was said that no one could do the things He did unless that One were from God. We may say the same of His words. They are majestic; yet there is no marshaling of phrases, no attempt at processional sentences. We are not conscious of ambitious learning; yet the most exalted truths ever spoken are contained in the words of Jesus.

Manifestly this divine Leader and Teacher transcends all classification. Yet the fact that He acknowledges no master, Who Himself is Master of all, that He belongs to no school, since all schools which profess truth receive truth from Him—this does not mean that in Him are not found the greatest gifts of the greatest masters, the deepest wisdom of the most renowned schools. Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Epictetus—they are a memory; their systems, their teachings, rest between the covers of books in the silences of libraries away from the comings and goings of men. Jesus is a reality; not only in everlasting union with His Father as the Son of God; but as Man here upon this earth, His humanity touches, inspires, uplifts. He is still the Teacher, simple, yet exalted and deep, to

whom millions listen; the Leader kind, merciful, brave, tolerant, whom millions follow with the courage of trusting hearts.

When we reflect upon the humanity of Jesus we do not, it is evident, minimize His divinity. Shorn of the attribute of divinity the Saviour becomes merely the subject of classification. He is a great teacher, a powerful leader, an exponent of an ethical code, a reformer, a gentle healer, a master who sets high truths to simple, chaste phrases. There are thousands in these days who write of Jesus in books and magazines with sympathy and loving appreciation. They speak of His gentleness, His mercifulness, His tolerance, His courage in opposing the strong and in defending the oppressed. But they do not refer to Jesus as the Son of God. They repudiate or suppress His divine character. Now to refuse to accept the Saviour as God is to classify Him with impostors. He asserted, over and over again, that He is God. If He be not God, then He cannot be considered a teacher, guide, or prophet, since He Himself and the entire structure of His teaching are founded on deception. We must accept Jesus all in all. He is appealingly human, but His humanity is humanity glorified by divinity. Jesus is not a great Teacher and Leader if He be not the Son of God. Assertions about a compellingly human personality that has influenced the lives and the thoughts of millions, while the divine in Him is suppressed, belittle Him, set Him apart as an impostor. The true believer must accept Jesus as He is, not as an age of unfaith would reconstruct Him. For all who would follow Jesus acceptance must be complete; there must be no conditions to their loyalty. Their profession of faith must be that of St. Peter: "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God."<sup>1</sup> Their cry of joyous recognition must be that of St. Thomas: "My Lord and my God!"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi: 16.

<sup>2</sup> John xx: 28.

## STUDY TOPICS

1. What were the qualities which made Jesus a natural leader?
2. Contrast the way Jesus met His opposition with the way in which His enemies met theirs.
3. Mention cases in which Christ's mercy is manifested today.
4. Explain what is meant by the "letter and spirit of the law." Can you account for the difference?
5. What instances have we of Christ-like bravery today?
6. Where do we find Scribes and Pharisees today?
7. Give some advantages of using parables.

## VII. JOURNEYS THROUGH THREE PROVINCES

*Jealousy of the Baptist's Disciples; John's Answer to Them; "He must increase and I must decrease"; Meeting the Samaritan Woman at the Well; The Living Water Which Jesus Promised Accepted Literally; God Is the Father of All Races and Peoples; Woman Spreads the News That She Has Seen the Messiah; Disciples Request Jesus to Eat; His Answer; Many Converts in Samaria; Cure of the Officer's Son; Jesus Goes to Jerusalem; Infirm Man Cured at the Pond of Bethesda; Objections to His Cure on the Sabbath; Defense of Jesus; Judgment One of the Prerogatives of the Son of God; Eternal Life through Jesus; The Redeemer Seeks the Will of Him That Sent Him; Witnesses of Jesus; Moses Himself Is the Accuser of the Unbelieving Jews; Imprisonment of John the Baptist Referred to by the Saviour. (John iii, iv, v.)*

After Our Lord had ended His first official visit to Jerusalem, during which He drove buyers and sellers out of the Temple, He went north into the country districts of Judea. John the Baptist had already left the Jordan and was exercising his ministry of preaching and baptizing close to where Christ labored.

The proximity of the Messiah and the prophet, and the fame which was coming to the Former with every hour, awakened feelings of jealousy in the hearts of John's disciples. The fact that so many Jews went to Jesus for Baptism caused John's followers to inquire why these men preferred the Baptism of Jesus to that of John. Not receiving what they considered a satisfactory reply, they presently went to the Precursor himself and said with some show of feeling: "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony, behold He baptizeth and all men come to Him." They were disappointed because John did not share either in their bitterness or in their anxiety. In fact their words had the opposite effect

on him. "A man cannot receive anything," he replied, "unless it be given him from Heaven." The Baptist knew his mission was to make straight the way for the coming of the Messiah, not to set up a way for himself. Between him and Jesus there was no opposition. "You yourselves do bear me witness," he went on, "that I said I am not Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled." The delicate figure here used by the Precursor, taken from Jewish social life, is strikingly apt. Those who have read in Jewish domestic relationships the part played by the intermediary of the betrothed couple will readily see the fitness of the allusion. Christ is the Bridegroom, the Church is to become His spouse. The Baptist, as announcer, introduces the Bridegroom to the future bride just as the Jewish *shadchan*, or intermediary, made the young couple known to each other and fostered in them mutual affection.

And that the disciples of the Baptist may have no false impressions, he says to them with unmistakable directness: "He must increase, but I must decrease." He adds by way of explanation: "He that cometh from above is above all. He that is of this earth, of the earth he is and of the earth he speaketh." The import of his concluding words these messengers cannot mistake: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Our Lord, after reaching the confines of Judea, decided to continue His journey north into Galilee. The most direct route led through the province of Samaria; but because of the hostility of the Samaritans most travelers took the road beyond the Jordan. Jesus, however, decided to take the road across

the unfriendly country, probably to accomplish some good among those people. It was the summer season and all the countryside was rich with ripening fields. He walked, accompanied by His little band of followers, over the dusty roads under a hot sun pouring down from a remote sky. At length, growing weary of the long journey, He stopped to rest at a well set away in a shady place, while His Apostles went into the village of Sichar to buy food.

While He rested there, a woman of the Samaritan race came to draw some of the water for domestic purposes. Jesus said to her in His most kindly manner, "Give Me to drink." The woman was surprised, as she knew at once from His costume and accent that He was a Jew. "How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman?" The hostility existing between the Samaritans and the lineal Jews was notorious; hence the surprise of this woman at the Saviour's request.

Jesus did not ask again, but passed on immediately to a larger theme. "If thou didst know the gift of God and who He is that saith to thee, 'Give Me to drink,' thou, perhaps, wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." The content of Our Saviour's words went beyond the understanding of this country woman, and her mind held to His previous request. "Sir, Thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep; from whence then hast Thou living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof, himself and his children and his cattle?" Jesus adhered to the symbolical meaning: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting."



The woman, who had not yet passed from the literal to the symbolical, made this very literal request: "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw." Immediately there followed the abrupt request from Our Lord that the woman call her husband, and later, her admission that she was a many times married woman. "Sir," she cried out in wonder, after her evil life had been made known to her, "I perceive that Thou art a prophet." Probably she did not care to continue the discussion of this unpleasant subject; so she passed on abruptly to the much mooted question of national worship. "Our fathers adored on this mountain" (they were standing at the base of Mount Gerizim) "and You say that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore."

The Saviour followed her over this new ground and revealed to her a new horizon. "Woman, believe Me that the hour cometh when you shall neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem adore the Father." Nationalism shall come to an end, for God is the Father of all races and peoples. "The hour cometh and now is when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore Him. God is a spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth." Then Jesus revealed Himself to this woman of the people when in answer to her implied question, He said: "I am He who am speaking with thee." Transported with happiness, she hastened to her home and spread the glad news that she had seen the Messiah and had spoken with Him. "Come," she cried, "and see a Man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done."

Toward the close of the conversation the disciples returned, and although scandalized at their Master for conversing with a woman of a despised race, they made no comment. He was silent and meditative for some time, till one of them said,

"Rabbi, eat." Out of His reverie He made answer, "I have meat to eat which you know not." As was so often to happen in His future messages to them, the disciples accepted His words literally. "Hath any man brought Him to eat?" they asked of one another. The Saviour explained, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work."

Presently people from the town, following the directions of the Samaritan woman, hurried out to see Him. It was near the harvest time and Jesus took occasion of the season to express a spiritual truth. "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and see the countries, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." Imagination naturally lingers on the comparison here employed. The figure of the ripe grain-fields, bending with golden promise, exhaling the wholesome, warm odors of the quiet, uncrowded country, is in tone with the spiritual attribution which lies half concealed in the metaphor. The stir of insect wings, the slumberous murmurs of the winds through the grain stems, those mysterious sounds of a warm summer noon, all belong in the picture to which the Saviour pointed when He stretched His hand over the growing fields.

Jesus remained two days in Samaria, where He spoke to the people and where His words bore abundant fruit. Vast numbers believed in Him, not so much for what had been related by the woman, as for what the people had witnessed themselves. "We now believe . . . and know that this is, indeed, the Saviour of the world."

From Samaria He turned His steps again to Galilee and went straight in the direction of Lake Genesareth. A joyous

welcome awaited Him as He passed through Cana, where some months before He had worked His first miracle. Out of the town of Capharnaum came an officer of Herod Antipas' soldiers to request that the great Healer cure his son, who was near death. "Unless you see signs and wonders," said Our Lord reproachfully, "you believe not." But the officer was not to be denied. "Lord, come down before that my son die." The divine Heart was touched by this humble expression of faith. "Go thy way. Thy son liveth." It was evening when the officer reached his home, and servants ran out to meet him with the joyful news that his son was suddenly and completely recovered.

At Cana the stay was a brief one; because, in order to be present at the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus had to set out at once for Jerusalem. This time He went as a simple pilgrim; yet an occasion presented itself in which to show His omnipotence. Near one of the gates of the city there was a pond called Bethsaida, over which was erected a building of five arches where those afflicted with diseases were accustomed to take refuge. The belief was common that from time to time an angel came from heaven and moved the water, and that the first one to enter the pond after the water had been moved would be cured of his malady. This pond was probably a mineral spring of natural curative powers and possessed no supernatural gift of healing except in the imaginations of the simple, religious folk.

Among the unfortunates that waited was a man who had been infirm for thirty-eight years. Jesus spoke to him first. "Wilt thou be made whole?" The sick man at once explained his case. "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me in the pond. For whilst I am coming, another goeth

down before me." Jesus, pitying his condition, wrought his immediate cure. "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." It was the Sabbath; and when the Jews saw the healed man carrying his bed as he walked along the street their rigorism was again offended. "It is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed." The restored man excused himself in this way: "He that made me whole said to me, 'Take up thy bed and walk.'" Jesus, wishing to avoid publicity, had already escaped from the crowds and the man did not know the name or whereabouts of his Benefactor. Later on, when the Saviour met him again, He gave him this salutary warning: "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more lest some worse thing happen to thee." Perhaps the paralytic's infirmity was caused by certain excesses in his way of life; hence the wholesome reproof.

From this time the opposition of the upper-class Jews to the Messiah may be said to take its beginning. He was accused as a breaker of the Sabbath, a traducer of the ancients, a scorner of tradition. In answer, Jesus points to His Eternal Father. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing; for what things soever He doth, these the Son also doth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all things which Himself doth." The Saviour here gives us the secret of His religious life. His thoughts are always turned toward the Eternal Father, who by love is seen through the Word. In the divine plan the Son is, in a sense, initiated into the work of the Father and works through the Father. The greatness of His works is the greatness of the works of the Father. "And greater works than these will He show you," He says, "that you may wonder; for as the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life, so the Son also giveth life to whom He will."

To give beings life and to pass judgment on how that life is spent are the two great prerogatives of God toward His creatures. Since Christ is God, these prerogatives are His also, and in particular, the prerogative of judgment. "For neither doth the Father judge any man; but hath given all judgment to the Son; that all men may honor the Son as they honor the Father."

Through the Son we come to know all it is possible for us to know of the Father. He tells us about the Father; and unless we hear and obey Him we cannot penetrate any of the hiddenness of God. Condemnation or approbation, eternal death or resurrection to life everlasting, will be meted out to us in just proportion to our acceptance or rejection of the words of Jesus, and the sacred truths which they contain. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, that he who heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death to life."

Then with dramatic fitness the Saviour brings the reality of His words into the present. The time for hearing God's word is not some remote day, nor the place some nebulous heaven of a far-off Supreme Being. "Amen, amen, I say unto you that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself." He iterates yet again His relationship to the Eternal Father. His authority and power He has received from the Father; what He does, He does through the Father. "I cannot of Myself do anything. As I hear, so I judge; and My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will but the will of Him that sent Me."

Jesus is not His own witness, for others testify to the truths which He proclaims. God is His witness, and God's latest

prophet, St. John the Baptist, is His witness also. "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which He witnesseth of Me is true. You sent to John; and he gave testimony to the truth . . . But I have a greater testimony than that of John. For the works which the Father hath given Me to perfect; the works which I do, give testimony of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." God the Father testifies to His origin and works, St. John the Baptist testifies, and His works themselves by virtue of their goodness and their miraculous character may be said to witness for Him also.

Jesus is come from the Father and must be heard because of the Father. "And the Father Himself who hath sent Me hath given testimony of Me." Jesus Himself is not so much the accuser of these unbelieving, censorious Jews. It is their father Moses who accuses them. "Think not that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you, Moses, in whom you trust. For if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe Me also, for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" If they do not believe him who gives the testimony, they will not believe Him in whose favor the testimony is given.

In His discussion with the Jews the Saviour referred to John the Baptist, who He declared was a shining light. It is not the first time Jesus takes occasion to eulogize the great Precursor. And surely the Baptist has shown himself worthy of the high praise bestowed upon him because of his devotion to Jesus, and his unfailing opposition to whoever opposes the Messiah.



## STUDY TOPICS

1. Explain why the disciples of John were jealous.
2. What was the Jewish custom regarding the introduction of the groom to the bride?
3. What virtue was found in John that enabled him to answer his disciples as he did?
4. Can you explain why Jesus spoke in a way that the woman could not understand?
5. How has Christ's prophecy concerning worship been fulfilled?
6. Explain the quotation, "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and see the countries."
7. How did Christ look upon the Samaritans?
8. What virtue in the officer do you think Christ rewarded?
9. Defend Christ's breaking of the Sabbath.
10. Why do you believe the words of Christ?

## VIII. SOJOURN AROUND LAKE GENESARETH

*The Synagogue; Jesus Visits the Synagogue at Nazareth; Speaks of His Mission and Work; Nazarenes Unsympathetic; No Prophet Accepted in His Own Country; Compares Fellow Townsmen to Faithless Jews of History; Jesus Driven Out of the Synagogue; Goes to the Shores of Genesareth; Preaching from the Boat; Miraculous Draft of Fishes; "Leave your nets and follow Me"; At Capharnaum; Demon Expelled from a Possessed Man; St. Peter's Mother-in-Law Cured; Leper Cleansed near Corozain; Returns to Capharnaum; Pharisees Would Examine into His Doctrine; Palsied Man Forgiven and Cured; Conversion of Levi, the Future Matthew; Feast at Matthew's House; Instruction and Conversation of Jesus during the Dinner; Pharisees Silent on This Occasion. (Luke iv, v; Mark i, ii; Matt. iv, viii, ix.)*

On every Sabbath day the Jews were obliged to assemble in the synagogue, and not infrequently they went to the optional services on Monday and Thursday. Every town of any size had a number of these synagogues. Tiberias alone, for instance, had twelve, and Jerusalem over four hundred. Usually the synagogue was a rectangular building, the interior of which was sanctified by the sanctuary, with its reproduction of the Ark of the Covenant and certain books of the law. In the sanctuary proper sat the priests and other dignitaries, facing the people, and beyond these officials was a great, unobstructed space for the accommodation of the more humble worshipers. Generally the priests and the Levites preached to the assemblage, although on special occasions others were invited to discourse on certain set themes. If, however, a person asked permission to address the people, it was assumed he had some important message to deliver.

While on a visit to Galilee during His earlier ministrations,

Our Saviour entered the synagogue of His native town of Nazareth. The reading of the law was over and certain selections taken from the prophets were about to be recited. Jesus arose and asked the presiding officer's permission to speak. The permission was granted, and a minor official handed Him a roll of parchment containing certain prophecies of Isaias. After He had unrolled the parchment, the Saviour read: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart, to preach deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of reward."

He ceased here, handed back the parchment to the officer and sat down, which was the conventional sign that He wished to explain the text. "This day," He began in a solemn tone, "is fulfilled this scripture in your ears." He then spoke for some time of His mission and His work, showing how the prophecies were fulfilled in Him. He was able to prove from the testimony of the Baptist and from the many miracles He had wrought that the spirit of God was come upon Him and that He was indeed the Messiah foretold by the prophets. His gentleness, His forbearance, His stainless purity, His zeal in announcing the truth, proclaimed those qualities of mind and heart which belong to Messiahship. In spite of prejudice and a disposition to belittle a Leader come out of their own town, those Nazarenes who listened could not but secretly admire the grave eloquence of the Preacher. But where prejudices are deep-seated, even well-deserved admiration is short-lived. As a matter of fact, many of His hearers did not understand the exalted meaning of His words and merely took the Saviour for a fellow-townsmen of obscure birth. "Is not this the son of Joseph?" they asked in a belittling tone. He heard the bitter gibes which

were intended to wound, and turning around He looked fixedly at His critics. "Doubtless you will say to Me this similitude, Physician heal Thyself. As great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in Thy own country." His reply to this taunt has become axiomatic: "Amen, I say to you that no prophet is accepted in his own country." Home talent is seldom recognized in the home town; it withers in the chill of studied indifference. After half the world has bowed in homage, the native citizenry discovers its famous citizen and applauds. The discovery is belated, the applause anticlimax.

The Master compared these jealous, provincial Nazarenes to the faithless Jews of Jewish history. "In truth I say to you, there were many widows in the days of Elias in Israel, when heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout all the earth. And to none of them was Elias sent but to Sarepta of Sidon, to a widow woman. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed save Naaman the Syrian." By application, this means that as the Messiah did not appear visibly to all the world, but only to the Jews of Palestine, so He will exhibit His power in Palestine only to towns of His choosing.

When the Nazarenes heard themselves compared to the faithless ones of their own race they arose in a sudden fury and drove the Saviour from the synagogue, pursuing Him to the summit of the hill along which Nazareth was built. Here He escaped and disappeared, going across the mountains near Lake Genesareth. Journeying through these He found His way to the shores of the lake, where He was so often to come again, and saw Peter and Andrew letting down their nets for one last, seemingly hopeless attempt after a night of fruitless fishing. Calling to them from the shore He said: "Come after Me,

and I will make you to become fishers of men." They obeyed and pushed back to the land. A short distance away John and James, with Zebedee, their father, were cleaning their nets; and these Jesus called also.

Meantime the crowd, attracted by His presence, surrounded Him. Owing to the crush it was impossible to speak to those about; and so He entered Simon Peter's boat and was rowed from the land. While the boat swayed gently with the motion of the waves, He addressed those who stood on a shore that rose in a gradual slope to the horizon, with Syrian violets everywhere visible between the rocks. At the end of the discourse He thought of Peter and his night of profitless fishing. "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft." The discouraged Simon Peter made answer: "Master, we have labored all the night and have taken nothing. But at Thy word I will let down the net." Out of the deep, when the net was pulled up, came a great haul to gladden the hearts of the fishermen. Peter, always the man of impulses, cried out in humility and gratitude: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The Saviour gave this encouraging answer: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Then, when all had come to shore and landed, He gave the fishermen the call to become His followers in these direct, terse words: "Leave your nets and follow Me." Four of those then present—Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John—immediately left their occupations and went with Him.

Capharnaum, so often mentioned in the Gospels, was a prosperous town built on a neck of land that ran out into Lake Genesareth. Jesus often stayed there, and worked some of His most striking miracles during His visits. He went there about this time, though we are not certain whether it was before or after Simon's miraculous draft of fishes. As Capharnaum

was built on the highway of the caravans, it was continually visited by strangers, who advanced not a little the prosperity of the town. Merchants came there to buy and to sell early fruits, salt and fresh fish, and grain of all kinds. Jews, Pagans, and Proselytes met and mingled in money-getting pursuits. It was a frontier town, too, between the kingdom of Philip and that of Antipas; and a garrison was stationed there, with a toll-gate keeper who took in the customs of the travelers going back and forth. Capharnaum was set in a natural loveliness not surpassed anywhere in Palestine. From the rock on which the city was built the eye could rest on the quiet waters of Lake Genesareth and then pass along the shore line that sloped in all directions. Mills were erected there which were run by waters that gushed out as natural springs around the lake and made Capharnaum not only a place of beauty but a place of industry as well.

During this visit, while Jesus preached in the synagogue to the great crowd that came to hear Him, a demon that held possession of a man in the audience, cried out: "Let us alone. What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." The Messiah checked him sharply: "Hold thy peace and go out of him." The victim of the possession was immediately thrown into convulsions, and was hurled violently into the middle of the building, while with a loud cry the demon went out of him. As we should expect, great excitement followed. Fear and wonder took hold of those that were present, and this single sentence expresses, perhaps, the thought that was in every mind: "What word is this, for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they go out?"

The Master stayed at Simon Peter's house that night; and while there He learned that Peter's mother-in-law was ill with



fever, probably contracted from the swamps that surround the Jordan before it forms Lake Genesareth. When told of her illness He went to her bedside, took her by the hand, and raised her up. At His touch the fever left her. Later, an influx of visitors, attracted, no doubt, by the Saviour's presence, came to Peter's house, the sick of every kind and degree being among the number. They were all restored by the touch of the divine Healer.

Before daylight the following morning Jesus left Capharnaum and visited Corozain and other towns near the lake. It was in one of these towns—St. Luke does not specify which—that He encountered the leper who threw himself before Him and cried out: "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." On his knees, his face against the ground, he waited humbly for the mercy of Jesus. Nor was he disappointed. "I will. Be thou made clean. But go, show thyself to the priest." Accordingly the leper went to Jerusalem, took two birds with him, and, as the law required, immolated one in the Temple and set the other at liberty. Jesus imposed secrecy on the restored man, a circumstance which has called forth several explanations, the most probable of which is the wish on the part of Jesus to avoid conflict with His jealous enemies, whose hostility to His miracle-working was notorious. And, moreover, the formalities required to be gone through by those cleansed of leprosy were many and exacting. The restored leper carried out the condition of showing himself to the priest, but neglected to observe secrecy and silence. On the contrary, he went abroad, proclaiming the miracle everywhere.

Jesus came again to Capharnaum by way of the lake, thus avoiding the crowds that now continually followed Him. Doctors and Pharisees from Jerusalem, always conscious of their importance, were there before Him to examine His ortho-

doxy. They had heard of His miracles and came with considerable self-importance to ask the Saviour to give an account of Himself, since they hoped thereby to be given an opportunity to exhibit their own knowledge. It was probably to Peter's house that the delegation went to meet Him. So great a crowd had already assembled that some men bearing a palsied patient in a litter could not force an entrance. But the flat roof served their purpose. They climbed up the outside stairway, made their way to the roof, and by means of an opening let the sick man down into the interior of the house. The Saviour, admiring the faith and charity, and perhaps also the ingenuity which the act manifested, said, much to the surprise of all those present: "Be of good heart, son. Thy sins are forgiven thee." Disappointment was expressed on the faces of all those present because they did not see an external, visible miracle performed, such as they had come to witness; and one may be sure that the Doctors showed visible affront. Jesus promptly rebuked them: "Why do you think evil in your hearts? Which is easier to say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Arise, take up thy bed, and walk'?" Then, to show that the same omnipotence which performed the one could perform the other; that the Messiah could bring about external, supernatural restoration as well as forgive sin, He said again to the sick man: "Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." The paralytic arose and walked.

Capharnaum, as we have seen, was a tax-collecting center, traversed by a great commercial road leading from Damascus to Ptolemais; it was also the market for a great amount of merchandise brought across the lake in boats. The tax-gatherer was not in favor with the Jews. His was a despised calling, himself an outcast. One day during this visit, as Our Lord passed through the custom-house when returning from the lake,

He came upon Levi, the son of Alpheus, seated at his desk. Perhaps the tax-gatherer in this instance showed by some external signs the good disposition of his heart; possibly his very rejection by the Jews made him acceptable to the Master. At any rate, Jesus said to him: "Follow Me." At once he left his desk and profession and became the Apostle Matthew, who later, as an Evangelist, was to record the sayings and deeds of the Redeemer.

In order to celebrate fittingly so important an event in his life, the future Matthew, a day or so later, gave a dinner to which he brought certain of his fellow tax-gatherers. Jesus was invited and graciously accepted, much to the scandal of the Pharisees. They very pointedly made their objections known to the disciples: "Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" The Saviour overheard their criticisms and answered simply: "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill." The literal meaning of this tropical sentence being understood by the disciples, Jesus added: "Go then, and learn what this meaneth, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.'" Then He added: "I am not come to call the just, but sinners, to penance." Thus by unfailing iteration the Master gives emphasis to one of the greatest purposes of His Mission, to lift up and save the sinner and the outcast. Over and over again in various forms of language, through a variety of metaphors, He expresses this truth.

During the dinner, objections to the disciples' unabstemious habits rather than to the character of the person who gave the feast were raised. "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Thy disciples do not fast?" The self-sufficiency implied in the question is almost humorous. Jesus answered in metaphor: "Can you make the children of the bridegroom fast whilst the bridegroom is with them?" The Apostles are the

children of Jesus, the first in the great family born of His divine spouse, the Church. He, the Bridegroom, is still with them, and it is fitting they rejoice for the joy of His presence. Soon He will leave them, and then the days of grief will come. So the Saviour added, somewhat sadly: "But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them; and then they shall fast in those days." One can readily picture all that is implied in this prophecy, which shall find fulfillment in Jerusalem and on Calvary. In the next sentence He spoke a similitude: "No man putteth a piece from a new garment upon an old garment; otherwise he both rendeth the new, and the piece from the new agreeth not with the old." Then He changed the trope: "And no man putteth new wine in old bottles; otherwise the new wine will break the bottles, and it will be spilled and the bottles will be lost. But new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved." The new wine of Christianity cannot be put into the old, outworn receptacles of Judaism. The new, living truth must find its own form of expression. There is a lightness of touch in His next reference to the wine which was even then served at the table. "No man, drinking old, hath presently a mind to new; for he saith the old is better."

All these sentences, taken from the conversation of Jesus while He sat at the banquet table, were remembered by the tax-gatherer and future Evangelist. There is a restful cheer underlying comment and suggestion which is altogether in keeping with the occasion. While all that Jesus says is pre-eminently informative, it does not appear didactic. It is conversation raised to the dignity of art: easy, cheerful, instructive. It is dogmatic, but the Exponent of these quieter domestic truths is not a dogmatist. Indeed, the Jews delighted to converse at social dinners, and were wont to discuss philosophy,

politics, and religion while they ate. These banqueters, we may well imagine, listened with rapt attention to the Saviour's gracious words, as He illustrated His theme with strikingly appropriate figures. The Pharisees, if any were present on this occasion, were silent, overcome by the force of His logic, if not by the sweetness of His manner and His broad, gentle charity.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Draw a diagram of the interior of a synagogue.
2. Can you show that Christ's words about a prophet in his own country are true today?
3. Why were the twelve called to Apostleship?
4. What would you have done if you had been in Peter's place and Christ had told you to let down the net?
5. Why were the people disappointed at first when Christ forgave the sins of the palsied man?
6. To what criticisms against the Church might Christ's words, "I am not come to call the just, but the sinners," be used as an answer?
7. Give examples to show that the Church still carries out this teaching of Christ.
8. How may we renew the delights of the banqueters in feeling the presence of Jesus, and in listening to what He has to say to us?
9. Notice that Jesus is the name of an historical personage, and Christ (Anointed) the name of his official position as the Messiah.
10. In his Gospel St. Luke tells us that Jesus left Nazareth, where the people were losing opportunities for acquiring unusual graces, and went to Capharnaum, where He made His home hereafter. Trace the journey on your map.
11. As evidence of the fact that St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke have not copied each other, or have not even taken the material for their Gospels from the same source, compare their accounts of the cure of the leper. (Matt. viii: 2-4; Mark i: 40-45; Luke v: 12-15.) Although they differ in time, place, and details, they agree exactly about the words of the leper and Jesus. The Oral Gospel had carefully preserved these words.

## IX. RESTORING TO LIFE AND HEALTH

*Jairus, the Ruler of the Synagogue; The Woman Suffering from Hemorrhage; Her Pitiful Condition; Her Cure; Scene at the House of Jairus; Words of Comfort to the Ruler; "Why do you weep? The damsel is not dead but sleepeth"; The Girl Brought Back to Life; On Lake Genesareth; The Storm; Cry of the Apostles to the Sleeping Master; The Waves and the Sea Obey; "Why are ye fearful? O ye of little faith!"; Admiration of the Apostles; Boat Lands at Gergesa; Demons Driven Out of the Nude Man; People in Fear Request Benefactor to Leave; Cured Man Ordered to Tell the Favors Bestowed on Him; Centurion's Request That Jesus Cure His Servant; His Faith; His Humility; Tribute of the Master to the Centurion; Son's Cure; Cure of the Two Blind Men; Fame of Jesus Spreads; Another Visit to Nazareth; Nazarenes Still without Enthusiasm; Funeral of the Widow's Son; Widow's Son Brought Back to Life; John Sends His Disciples to Jesus; Reply of Jesus to Them; His Tribute to John the Baptist. (Matt. ix, Mark v, Luke viii, Matt. viii, Luke vii, Matt. xi.)*

Toward the end of the banquet at Matthew's house ("as He was speaking," St. Matthew says), Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, made his way into the room. His daughter, a girl about twelve years old, was at the point of death. The distressed man threw himself on his knees before Our Lord and cried out in his grief: "Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live." The Saviour left the company and the banquet immediately and went with this grief-stricken parent. No sooner had He reached the street than an immense crowd gathered around Him, drawn by various motives. Some were curious; some were enthusiastic. They wished to see what would happen; to criticize or to glorify the Messiah. And one at least sought a cure. She



was a woman who for twelve years had been suffering from a loss of blood. Again and again she had gone to physicians but had found no relief. Not only did she suffer physically, but she suffered morally and socially as well. Her disease constituted a legal impurity; perhaps she had to submit to the divorce sanctioned by the law; and at every turn she was obliged to go through those endless precautions which a rigorous society exacted. Steadily she had grown worse despite all the remedies prescribed, and as a last hope sought the Miracle Worker of whom she had heard. Out of her great faith she said to herself: "If I shall touch only His garment I shall be healed." Following up her thought, she came close behind Jesus and touched the tassel which hung from His cloak. Her cure was instantaneous. Jesus, knowing what had happened, said: "Who is it that touched Me?" But no one answered. Perhaps the woman did not wish to attract attention by declaring that a miracle had been worked in her favor. The impulsive Peter broke the silence by asking rather abruptly: "Master, the multitudes throng and press Thee, and dost Thou say, 'Who touched Me?'" The Saviour, paying no attention to this rather brusque interruption, repeated: "Somebody hath touched Me; for I know that virtue is gone out from Me." The woman, now no longer timid either from fear or shame, came forward, threw herself at the feet of Jesus, and proclaimed her cure. Jesus said to her in His gentlest manner, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace and be thou whole of thy disease."

Meantime word came from the house of Jairus that the child was already dead. Hence, when the grief-stricken father begged Jesus to hasten to his home, he was restrained by his relatives with the protest, "Thy daughter is dead. Why dost thou trouble the Master?" Jesus, the Supreme Consoler, gave

him hope, however, "Fear not; believe only, and she shall be safe." The Master entered the house, followed by Peter, James, and John, who were privileged to witness so many divine manifestations. Already the mourners had begun their traditional lamentations over the deceased. The music of the professional flute players expressed a professional sorrow; the keening of the hired women rose and fell in waves of sound about the bed. Jesus asked, "Why make you this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." The people within the house, failing to understand the divine sense of His words, laughed with incredulity. Presently He dismissed all witnesses except the parents of the girl and the three disciples who had entered with Him. He went to the couch, took the child by the hand, and said simply, "Maid, arise." Instantly life came back and the girl arose. We can readily imagine the joy of the grief-stricken parents at the sudden restoration of their daughter as well as the amazement of all those assembled, at this exhibition of divine power.

After the long day of miracles and conflict Jesus returned to Lake Genesareth, where He entered one of the boats of His Apostles and was rowed out on the water. Genesareth must have had a peculiar charm for the soul of the Saviour. Whenever He was worn and spent He retired there for respite and renewal. In this, as in so much else, He gives evidence of His winning humanity. There is that about the vision of waters which affords the sense of aloofness to the human spirit. The motion and beat of the waves, the hush that gathers like the folding of wings at evening, the feeling of remoteness from the comings and goings of men in the endless march of life—all serve to entice the soul into gentler moods. Imagination will readily picture for us this peaceful evening. No wind was stirring, and the waves lapped gently against the boat, which

left a track of foam in its wake. Above, the stars shone out of a cloudless sky and a warm fragrance came from the receding shore. Worn out after the labors of the long day, Jesus lay back in the boat and fell asleep. The Apostles rowed very gently so as not to awaken Him.

In Palestine, as in other tropical lands, it is not unusual for a storm to break suddenly out of a cloudless sky. It was so now. Winds arose abruptly from the heights of Hauran, from the table lands of Gaulanitis and from the summit of Mount Hermon; then met and rushed on together. The little boat, caught in the whirlwind, was flung in every direction. Accustomed though they were to the lake winds, the disciples at the present moment were thoroughly frightened. As the boat suddenly swerved and seemed to sink, these poor Galileans, thinking themselves lost, called aloud to their sleeping Master, "Master, we perish!" Jesus arose, looked out upon the tempest, and with the voice of one accustomed to command, ordered the winds and the sea to be still. It is not difficult to realize the sense of relief that came to those simple men on being thus suddenly saved from disaster. Then when the waves had subsided and all danger had passed, Jesus said in a tone of gentle rebuke: "Where is your faith?"

It is reported of Caesar that once, when caught in the jaws of a storm, he grasped the hand of the terrified pilot and said to him: "Keep on, fear not; you carry Caesar and his fortunes!" It was a brave saying and merits being classed in the highly dramatic. But it stops there. Jesus not only planted His courage in the souls of His disciples, but set His will upon the waves and made them silent and docile to His mandate. It is no wonder the amazed boatmen said to one another: "Who is this, think you, that He commandeth both the winds and the sea, and they obey Him?"

The Apostles rowed on over the calmer waters and landed in the country of Gergesa at the southeast of the lake. As soon as Jesus set foot on shore, He saw running among the tombs that lay along the side of one of the hills a nude man, who belonged in the category of those unfortunates possessed by demons. Attempts had been made to confine him, but he broke his chains again and again and escaped. When Jesus beheld the miserable victim, He commanded the demons to leave. The man stopped suddenly in his flight, ran toward the Lord, and threw himself at His feet. "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus the Son of the Most High God?" came the challenge of one of the possessing spirits. "I adjure Thee by God that thou torment me not! Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" There was no resisting, however, the power of the Master. The evil spirits went out of the man and entered a herd of swine; which latter, at the urging of the demons, rushed into the lake and were drowned. The victim of the possession, now cured, came and sat peacefully at the feet of Jesus. Even as a short time before, rest came upon the waves at the command of the Ruler of Waters, so now calm and gentle breathing came to this soul at the command of the Conqueror of demons.

When the people from nearby towns hurried to the scene, they learned of the wonderful cure. Astonishment gave way to fear in their hearts, and they respectfully requested their Benefactor to leave. As Our Saviour was departing, the man so strikingly freed from his calamity besought the Master to admit him to be one of His disciples. "No," answered Jesus, "return to thy house and tell how great things God hath done to thee." Thus he could best help the advance of God's kingdom.

Some days after the Saviour's return to Capharnaum, a Centurion, a friend of the Jews, who had built them a synagogue,

wished Jesus to cure his sick servant. A deputation from the synagogue brought his request to Jesus, who hastened with them in the direction of the Centurion's home. When this latter learned from a messenger that the Lord was on the way, he hurriedly sent friends to meet Him. His message to Jesus is a sign of that humble faith which he is to express so unmistakably a moment later: "Lord, trouble not Thyself, for I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof . . . . But say the word and my servant shall be healed." And the reason he gives has the soldier's point of view: "For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to one 'Go,' and he goeth, and to another 'Come,' and he cometh; and to my servant 'Do this,' and he doth it." Jesus has under Him the legions of heaven and earth. Cannot He also command, even when not physically present, and receive immediate obedience? Filled with admiration at this exhibition of confidence in divine intervention, the Master exclaimed to those about Him: "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith, not even in Israel." And He must have thought of the Pharisees, the quintessence of self-righteousness when He added: "And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." His next words addressed to the Centurion, who himself had arrived by this time, are an assurance to a faith about to be rewarded: "Go; and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee." The servant was cured at that moment, as the officer was to learn from his servants when he later reached home.

On His way back to the house in which He was staying, Christ encountered two blind men who cried out to Him: "Have mercy on us, O Son of David." He kept on walking and en-



tered the house. Then, turning to them, He asked: "Do you believe that I can do this unto you?" (Faith is always an essential condition.) They answered in one voice: "Yea, Lord." He came to them and touched their eyes. "According to your faith be it done unto you." Immediately they received their sight. Despite His admonition that they keep silence, the blind men revealed their wonderful cure; and as a result, persons with all manner of afflictions came to Him to be restored. His fame spread through town and countryside, and people cried out in amazement: "Never was the like seen in Israel!"

The Saviour now turned His steps toward Nazareth, taking with Him certain of His disciples. The reception on this occasion was somewhat more enthusiastic than the previous one. And yet, when on the Sabbath He attempted to instruct the people in the synagogue, His words were received in a questioning spirit rather than with docility. The former state of mind persisted. "How came this Man by these things?" Jesus was aware of their incredulity and reproached them again in the proverbial phrase applied by Him on a former visit: "A prophet is not without honor save in His own country."

After only a few days in this chilling atmosphere, He said farewell and went to neighboring towns, where He was more hospitably received. During one of these journeys He came to Naim, a lovely town on the northwestern slope of Little Hermon. One evening He and His disciples were gathered together near one of the gates, quietly conversing, when a funeral procession was seen advancing. The men, in attitudes of mourning, their heads covered, solemnly marched along, the coffin borne after them; and following the coffin, weeping women moved slowly. It was the funeral of a widow's son. The sight touched the merciful Heart of Jesus, and He said to the heart-broken mother, "Weep not!" Then He requested those who carried the coffin to let it rest on the ground. They obeyed, and Jesus



said those words that meant comfort to the widow and life to the son: "Young man, I say to thee, arise." The young man rose up and at once began to speak, and Jesus restored him to his mother. It was small wonder indeed that everywhere the cry went up: "A great Prophet is risen up among us; and God hath visited His people."

The fame resulting from all these miracles reached John, now languishing in prison. To strengthen their waning faith in his own previous preaching, but especially to awaken their enthusiasm for the "Lamb of God," the Precursor sent two of his disciples to the Messiah with the question: "Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another?" John himself had no doubt as to the divine personality of Jesus, or as to the reality of His Messiahship. Already he had proclaimed Him to be the "Lamb of God," and had declared his own unworthiness to baptize the Saviour in the Jordan. He wished, as already stated, to strengthen the faith of his disciples in the divinity of his Master.

When the messengers arrived the Lord was engaged curing a number of the sick brought to Him. He listened with attention to the question put to Him; then pointing to those whom He had just healed, said: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the gospel is preached." The Saviour, who knew John's purpose in sending these disciples, then paid a splendid tribute to the Precursor after the messengers had gone. Turning to those gathered around Him, all of whom knew the Baptist, He asked: "What went you out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? . . . But what went you out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is He of whom it is written: Behold I send my angel

before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee." A glorious eulogy surely to receive from the lips of Truth itself! The picture of John is complete. Not a vacillating man without convictions, as his defiance of Herod amply shows; nor yet an easy living, richly dressed lover of comfort and pleasure, as all could testify who knew the penitential life of the Baptist. He was a prophet greater than all the prophets, since it was he who introduced the Messiah to a world yet unredeemed.

"Amen, I say to you," continued Jesus, "there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist." Could eulogy go higher? Happy in his chains the man who deserved such praise from the lips of the Messiah; happy, too, in his death a little later, hearing the echo of these words yet in his heart.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. What other woman in the Gospel story manifests a faith comparable with that of the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment? Narrate the incident.

2. How great was the faith of the Apostles when they cried out in the storm, "Master, we perish"? In what way can we apply this scene to our lives?

3. How has the prophecy beginning, "And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west," been fulfilled?

4. What conclusion do you draw from the miracle of the healing of the Centurion's servant and that of the two blind men?

5. How did John the Baptist merit the approval of Jesus?

6. Herod was miserable amid earthly pleasures; John the Baptist was happy in chains. Where, then, must we seek happiness?

7. Give the boundaries of Lake Genesareth.

8. How would you go from Gergesa to Naim? From Capharnaum to Tiberias? From Nazareth to Capharnaum?

9. Find Mount Hermon on your map.

10. Name four important towns in Galilee.

## X. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

*Selection of the Apostles; Beatitudes; Lessons on Poverty; Condemnation of Feasting and Dissipation; Letting the Light of Good Example Shine before Men; Jesus Not to Destroy but to Fulfill the Law; Hypocrisy; Chastity; Almsgiving; Love of Our Enemies; How to Pray; Fasting; Charity; False Teachers; Admiration Aroused in His Hearers. (Matt. v, Luke vi, Matt. vi, vii.)*

We have reached the period in Our Lord's life at which He had definitely chosen His twelve Apostles. In the first group of His selection are Peter, Andrew, James, and John. These we may call the natural leaders. The second comprises Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas. Philip is mentioned in connection with the Miracle of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes; Bartholomew is the former Nathanael, the man without guile; Matthew, the despised tax-gatherer sitting at the gate to exact his collections, is become a prominent follower, and later will be a biographer of his Master. Thomas, the doubter in the days immediately following the Resurrection, will merit strength forever by his great acceptance. In the third group we find James the son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, Jude, and Judas. James, son of Alphaeus, is the first name in the third group which is composed of the less known of the Apostolic College. Jude will write an epistle later on; and Judas, placed last in the line—a disgrace to the company—will have the word "traitor" or the phrase, "who betrayed Him," always set after his name as a reminder of his infamy. Seven in this company are already known to us through the incident of selection; the calling of the other five is not recorded.

After completing the College of His Apostles, it was natural that Jesus should give expression to some great moral truths which would serve to epitomize His spirit. This He did in what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount, which we may consider His Inaugural Address. From the length and the fragmentary manner in which it has come down to us, the Sermon may have been delivered on different occasions. Some writers consider the "Mount" that elevation known as Hattin, which is in the neighborhood of the towns of Magdala and Tiberias, and rather near the high road leading to Capharnaum. On one of the eastern peaks of this plateau of Hattin is a level space measuring, perhaps, three hundred yards in circumference. Here it was that Jesus remained a night in prayer before finally selecting His Apostles. After He had made His choice, He descended into a lower plateau, where a great crowd of people awaited Him.

When He delivered this memorable sermon, the Apostles immediately surrounded Him. Outside their circle stood the disciples, and next in order were the Jews, strangers, and heathen.

The Saviour began by enumerating the eight surest means of securing Blessedness, human and divine. All that follows is practically the iteration and exposition of these eight points.

(1) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

(2) "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.

(3) "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

(4) "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.

(5) "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

(6) "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.

(7) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

(8) "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Poverty, meekness, spiritual sorrow, a hungering after justice, mercifulness, purity, peacefulness, patience in suffering, are set up as signposts to mark out the road to heaven. And the practice of these virtues will serve to distinguish all the followers of Jesus from the rest of the world. As if He feared their content might not have been fully understood, Our Lord repeated many of these points in more direct, concrete form.

Thus, speaking of the rich, He contrasts their lot with that of the poor: "Woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation." The rich now have human comforts and pleasures, which serve to take their thoughts away from God. As a result, they do not render Him service, and will receive punishment instead of reward.

Referring to those who live in feasting and dissipation and know nothing at all about self-denial and sacrifice, He declares: "Woe to you that are filled, for you shall hunger. Woe to you that now laugh, for you shall mourn and weep." The laudation of men, which so many seek, as well as the pomp and show of life, are dismissed with this unmistakable reminder: "Woe to you when men shall bless you, for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets." The new precept of love for our enemies is again brought to the attention of the audience. "But I say to you, love your enemies. Do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you." They are reminded of the charity that consists in giving: "Give to everyone that asketh thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again."

Then in positive terms the Saviour declares in direct appeal to His Apostles: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out and to be trodden on by men." Then presently He changes the figure: "You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before all men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." The salt saves; the light directs. To save and to direct is the duty of the Apostles and disciples and their successors.

Continuing, Jesus assures His hearers that He is not come to destroy laws and institutions, but to fulfill and complete them. "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. Amen, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle of the law shall not pass, till all be fulfilled." He announces that our place before God depends upon our observance of the divine commandments. "He that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."

He condemns externalism as represented by the Scribes and Pharisees. Their justice is wanting in truth. They are hypocrites who give undue emphasis to formalism. "For I tell you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Not only does the Saviour condemn what is formally forbidden by the commandments, but also what is implied. "You have heard that it was said to them of old: 'Thou



shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire."

Jesus passes from the fifth to the sixth commandment. Not alone act, but thought and desire also are included in this observance. "You have heard that it was said to them of old: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart."

The malice of sin comes from the mind, just as unclean water springs from a corrupt source. Not only are we condemned for the evil we do but for the evil we think. The unworthy act we planned, the prosecution of which chance or circumstance frustrated, is set in the accounting against us as if the act were accomplished. Motive is the measure of accountability.

"And it hath been said: 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorce.' But I say to you that whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting for the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery." The old Mosaic divorce law, which had grown to such abuse among the Jews, is totally abrogated in the new and perfect law of Jesus. Marriage hereafter is a sacramental contract the obligation of which death alone can break. What the Mosaic dispensation tolerated, the Evangelical law repudiates. Although Jesus sets down here no prohibition about the remarriage of the offended wife or husband, He will do so later in language of which the content is unmistakable.

On the occasion when He does so the Pharisees put to Him the direct question: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" The Mosaic law said: "If a man take a wife and have her, and she doth not find favor in his eyes, for some uncleanness, he shall write a bill of divorce and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house."<sup>1</sup> Innumerable discussions had arisen as to just what was meant by uncleanness. Some interpreted the word to mean any defect which would render the wife disagreeable to the husband. Others, insisting on a strict interpretation, recognized conjugal infidelity as the only condition to which the divorce law applied. The answer of Jesus to these quibbling zealots, who are more anxious to confound the young Teacher than to hear the truth of the new dispensation, takes the question from the realm of discussion to that of certitude forevermore for all true followers of the Master. "Have you not read that He who made man from the beginning made them male and female? And He said: 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh.'"<sup>2</sup> Therefore," Jesus declared, "now they are not two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." To the Mosaic exception in favor of divorce, Jesus answered: "Moses, by reason of the hardness of your heart, permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so." Then in direct language: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery."<sup>3</sup>

Following His pronouncements on the sixth commandment, Jesus condemns needless oath-taking. "But I say to you, not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxiv: 1.<sup>2</sup> Gen. ii: 24.<sup>3</sup> Mark x: 11, 12

God; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great king. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black, but let your speech be yea, yea, no, no; and that which is over and above these is of evil."

Then the great Preacher transports His hearers to diviner heights: "You have heard that it hath been said: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'; but I say to you not to resist evil; but if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other; and if a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him. And whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two. Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away." In these hyperbolic terms, Jesus emphasizes brotherly love and mercy.

In the exposition of charity and forgiveness, He reaches sublime heights. "You have heard that it hath been said: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy.' But I say to you: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you; that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust."

We must be sincere and honest if we are to be true followers of the Master. "Take heed that you do not your justice before men to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven." In almsgiving we are not to be demonstrative. "Therefore, when thou dost an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men." The gentle irony here expressed must have been immediately perceived by the audience, who were familiar with

the ways of the Pharisees. The rule to be followed in our acts of benevolence is definitely announced. "When thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth; that thy alms may be in secret and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay thee." The concreteness of this illustration is very effective, as it particularly turns the mind upon genuine concealment when we give. Often, indeed, the donors appear in secret, but not infrequently leave open an escape for what modern business calls publicity.

The rules to be followed when we pray are not less explicit. "And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay thee." The prayer of the Pharisee standing far up in the Temple, so proud of his good works, asking for nothing and going away empty, is an unmistakable example of what the Saviour here has in mind. In direct contrast is the Publican's cry for mercy. Jesus then recites for His hearers the "Our Father," that most comprehensive of all prayers.

Fasting, as the most usual form of penance, is next considered; and here, too, all outward display is reprobated. "And when you fast, be not hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward." Penance and cheerfulness are to go together. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but thy Father, who is in secret; and thy Father, who seeth thee in secret, will repay thee."

The Saviour sets down certain instructive precepts for the

exercise of Christian charity. "Judge not, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." Because of the form in which Jesus here casts His thoughts, it becomes easy for memory to retain the wholesome aphorisms. The narrow, self-righteous attitude of the Scribes and Pharisees is condemned in the words: "And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye? Or how sayest thou to thy brother: 'Let me cast the mote out of thy eye'; and behold, a beam is in thy own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Our Saviour follows this warning with that great principle of action which has since come to be known as the Golden Rule: "All things, therefore, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them."

The difficulty of attaining salvation is emphasized for the benefit of the self-righteous. "Enter you in at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow the gate, and how straight is the way that leadeth unto life! And few there are that find it." Jesus admonishes His hearers to beware of false teachers whose purpose is to lead men astray by expounding wrong doctrines. "Beware of false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

Humanly speaking, the chief power of the great discourse is its contact with life. There is no vagueness. There is very

little abstract doctrine that is not fortified by concrete instances. One is never searching for an illustration. An example is set in the heart of the precept.

Concluding this sublime discourse, which is a summing up of Christian morality, the Saviour says: "Everyone, therefore, that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock. And everyone that heareth these My words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew; and they beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall thereof."

It is no wonder that all those gathered about Our Lord were carried away in admiration by His words. Never had they heard such high and holy truths in the studied, trite formalism of the Pharisees. It was evident to them that a new Master had come upon the earth. They did not, however, know or even suspect that His teachings would in the course of time change the whole aspect of religion and morality.

### SUGGESTIONS

The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v, vi, vii) exposes the Master's ideas of the three questions that concern our moral life: happiness, justice, and wisdom (Didon, *Life of Christ*, II:5).

The discourse might be divided (according to Godet, *Commentary on St. Luke*):

- (1) The call of those who were to constitute the new society.
- (2) The fundamental principles of that society.
- (3) The responsibilities of its members.
  - (a) Jesus promises *happiness* to those whom He calls.
  - (b) He prescribes *justice* to those who come.
  - (c) He recommends *wisdom* to those who remain with Him.



## STUDY TOPICS

1. Study the lives of the Apostles. Mention their earlier occupations. What have they now in common?
2. Amplify the beatitudes, and then summarize them in your own words.
3. What is Christ's warning to the rich?
4. Show the justice of our being condemned for sins of thought.
5. How far should we go in following Christ's words on brotherly love? Read carefully John xiii:35; here we have the soul of Christianity.
6. How can people today follow Our Lord's admonitions about public almsgiving?
7. What is the keynote of His discourse on prayer?
8. How is the Golden Rule still applicable to life?
9. Do you know of any false prophets of today?
10. How many doctrines of Roman Catholicism can you find in the Sermon on the Mount?

## XI. AT MAGDALA AND CAPHARNAUM

*Jesus Dines with Simon the Pharisee; Apparent Neglect Shown the Saviour; Jewish Custom of Watching Banquets from Outside; Magdalen the Public Sinner; She Ministers to Jesus; Protests by the Pharisees; Answer of the Master; Contrasts Mary's Conduct with Simon's; Mary Forgiven Her Sins; Jesus Goes to Capharnaum; Enthusiastic Reception; Conflict with the Pharisees; Not by Beelzebub Does He Cast Out Devils; No Neutrality in His Service; Sins against the Holy Ghost; Rebukes the Pharisees; Tribute from a Woman in the Audience; His Reply; Pharisees Demand a Sign; Jesus Answers Them; His Mother and Relatives Wish to See Jesus; "Who is My mother and who are My brethren?" (Luke vii; Mark iii; Matt. xii; Matt. xiii; Matt. x; Matt. xiv.)*

From the Mount, where He delivered His great sermon, Our Lord went to Magdala, a small village near Lake Genesareth. During His stay there He was invited to dine with Simon the Pharisee, an influential Jew who no doubt had heard of His preaching and miracles. It is not improbable that the element of curiosity was among the motives for asking the Redeemer to the feast; but in any case the reception was scarcely civil, certainly not cordial.

For instance, it was the general custom to remove the shoes from the feet of the guests, much as nowadays the guest's hat is put away when he enters the home of his host. The head of the family was wont to kiss the chief guest on the cheek as a sign of greeting and to say, "Peace be to you." Also, after the guest had reclined, a servant appeared to bathe and anoint the feet, while another anointed the hair and beard. In the case of Jesus all these elaborate ceremonies were omitted.

It was quite common, too, for people outside the house to observe the guests while they reclined and ate. It may seem to us wanting in delicacy to watch people at table as we would watch a spectacle. The element of privacy should veil an event so personal and domestic as a dinner. But there is no logic to fashion. And people in modern life who chronicle the names of their guests and the array of their courses in the public press should not cast stones at these Jews at Magdala who wished to be watched. Among the observers was a woman of striking beauty, whose charms had brought disaster to herself and to others. Although she belonged to an honorable family, she was looked upon as a public sinner, and as such was a marked and despised character. This sinner was none other than Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who was to become the model penitent for all coming ages.

The woman of sin noted, from where she watched, the uncivil reception given the Master. Her being was stirred by the mysterious workings of divine grace, and she rushed in to perform those acts of courtesy which Simon had intentionally neglected. Her entrance was seen, and the scorn on the faces of all the guests was unmistakable. She paid no heed to the glances of contempt, or to the whisperings of scorn, but made her way to Jesus and threw herself on her knees behind the couch on which He reclined. From her position of partial concealment she washed His blessed feet with her tears of repentance and wiped them with her hair; and from the floor where she knelt she kissed the feet again and again, her heart quickened with the deepest remorse; then she anointed them with the rich perfume with which she was wont to beautify her own person.

Immediately, as we should expect, the Pharisee in his own mind began to make a protest. "This man, if he were a

prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner." According to the doctrine of the Pharisees, the touch of a public sinner was as foul as that of a leper. Our Lord knew the thoughts of His host and, perhaps, heard certain muttered words of complaint. Turning to him, He said: "Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee. Dost thou see this woman?" Simon nodded. Jesus then presented for his consideration the hypothetical case of the two debtors: "A certain creditor had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which, therefore, of the two loveth him most?" Simon answered correctly: "I suppose that he [loved most] to whom he forgave most." Jesus next proceeds to contrast the attitude of Mary, the public sinner, and that of Simon, the man of high respectability: "I entered into thy house; thou gavest Me no water for My feet. But she, with her tears, hath washed My feet; and with her hairs hath she wiped them. Thou gavest Me no kiss, but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she with ointment hath anointed My feet. Wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much." Turning to all the Pharisees seated at the dinner Our Saviour added this spiritual axiom: "But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less." So it happens that the lowest sinner may rise through forgiveness and grace to the sublimest heights, while those less sinful may remain in the condition of ordinary Christian life, because they are wanting in charity.

Mary Magdalen, then, is no longer a lost woman. Because she believed and loved, the Good Shepherd took her to Himself and changed her from an outcast to a saint. Hereafter when she appears, it will be in the rôle of a most devoted fol-

lower and friend. She will be with Jesus at His Death and Burial and will be among the first to witness and proclaim His Resurrection.

From Magdala to Capharnaum the road runs northeast along the shores of Genesareth. To Capharnaum Jesus now went, and when He arrived there He was given a joyous greeting by the people of this thriving town. He worked miracles in favor of the sick, and the masses cried out in acclaim: "Is not this the son of David?" Not so the censorious Pharisees. They showed their antagonism by saying to one another: "This man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub." They referred to the miracle of a blind and deaf person just freed from a demon. Jesus replied by a question and certain comparisons: "How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan be risen up against himself, he is divided and cannot stand, but hath an end." The logic of this argument is irresistible; and the Saviour continued by making it more personal. "Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore, they shall be your judges." If Christ casts out demons it cannot be by demon power but by a power that is greater than that of demons. He tells His hearers so in the comparison: "When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armor wherein he trusted and will distribute his spoils." For Satan to conquer Satan would be absurd; Christ conquers Satan by reason of His superior power.

Neutrality in the service of Jesus is impossible. "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with

Me scattereth." Not to be the friend of Christ is to be His enemy; not to win eternal life with and by Him is to lose it. Miracles may be wrought, souls may be purified and bodies freed from demons. All is of no avail if there be not present the element of personal sanctity. A continuous battle must be waged against the enemy of souls. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he saith: 'I will return into my house whence I came out.' And when he is come he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwell there, and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first." Perseverance is the reward of vigilance and struggle.

In the teachings of Jesus all sins are to be avoided; yet not all sins are equally malicious. Sins that are a direct affront to God receive the greater condemnation. "I say to you: Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven." A sin against the Holy Ghost is a sin against the light, and those who sin against the light are not often in the disposition of repentance. Even a sin against the person of the Divine Son Himself is more likely to be pardoned. "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come."

In doubting the reality of the divine nature of the Saviour men may be misled, and into their condition of mind the element of malice may not enter. They are culpable, of course, but their sin is not too great to be forgiven. He, however, who sins against the Holy Ghost chooses deliberately darkness for light. He does not wander into the darkness through weakness



or carelessness. He wills to be in the dark. He stubbornly prefers night, falsehood, evil. God will pardon uncorrected promptings of the heart, waywardness of the mind, sins of flesh and blood. But he who sins against the Holy Ghost is one who, almost by profession, is on the side of the enemies of God. We may be personally great sinners, and as such not on terms of friendship with our Redeemer. But we are not expressly, formally, His enemies. We do not wish to be considered such; we have never entered into alliance against His cause; we have not gloried in our opposition and tried to win recruits for His enemies. Sins of the mind are very often sins against the light; sins of the heart are to be condemned and repented of, but not infrequently they are sins of weakness.

Jesus now flings defiance at the Pharisees in a way that must have amazed His hearers. "O generation of vipers, how can you speak good things whereas you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things, and an evil man, out of an evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." We are held accountable for what we say as well as for what we do. The Pharisees in their indignation could only reply, "He is become mad."

A woman in the audience, expressing, no doubt, the thought of many, cried out in admiration: "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the paps that gave Thee suck." "Yea, rather," answered Jesus, "blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." They who keep the word are they that persevere. Out of them is Jesus born spiritually.

The Pharisees, who had regained somewhat their composure,

issued a challenge to Him: "Master, we would see a sign from Thee." Jesus was not wont to perform miracles for the asking, just to show His power. In His divine plan miracles were wrought for a more serious purpose. Hence the answer: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign, and a sign shall not be given it but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." He then proceeded to tell them the signs of condemnation and ruin that were to come. "The Queen of the South shall rise in the judgment with the men of this generation and shall condemn them; because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And behold more than Solomon here. . . . The men of Ninive shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas. And behold more than Jonas here."

The language of this appeal arrests and detains. It is sonorous; it possesses a loftiness that is inescapable. The phrases, "Behold more than Solomon here," "Behold more than Jonas here," are not surpassed as examples of the compressed and reserved climax. Then the long sweep of time from Jonas and Solomon to Jesus and all the stirring events, the triumphs and humiliations of Israel, from their day to His, carry a great imaginative appeal. The reception of Solomon's wisdom by the Queen of the South and of Jonas' preaching by the men of Ninive make a distinct contrast to the censorious, unsympathetic attitude of these upper-class Jews toward Jesus.

Relatives of the Saviour, accompanied by His Blessed Mother, were discovered outside the assemblage for the purpose of leading Him away. The presence of the Pharisees and their known opposition made them fearful, perhaps, for the

safety of the Master. Their wish to see Him was conveyed by someone within the assemblage and nearer to the divine Teacher. "Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, seeking Thee." Jesus, to emphasize a larger truth, namely, that all His followers are His brethren, cried out: "Who is My mother and who are My brethren?" Then He stretched forth His hand in the direction of His Apostles and exclaimed: "Behold My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father that is in Heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother." Thus, too, in a spiritual sense, all those who follow Jesus along the difficult way He points out are His brethren.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. Have we any custom which compares to that of the Jewish custom of looking in at feasts?
2. Name the ways in which we, like the Pharisees, may be guilty of accusing wrongly.
3. What miracles had Jesus performed in Capharnaum up to this time?
4. Apply Christ's argument about a house divided against itself to the family and the state.
5. Apply the words "He that is not with Me is against Me" to certain types of people today.
6. What provision does God make against the fact that the devil comes back with seven others after he is driven out? Can this then be an excuse for falling?
7. What should we ask of the Holy Ghost?
8. Explain why we should not seek signs from God.
9. What must we do to be brethren of Christ?
10. Give a three-hundred word description of the Conversion of Mary Magdalen.

## XII. PARABLES AND MIRACLES

*The Parable; Jesus Teaches in Parables; Parable of the Sower; Explains This Parable to His Apostles; Parable of the Good Seed and the Cockle; The Mustard Seed; The Leaven; Explanation of the Cockle and the Good Seed; Similitude of the Treasure Hidden in the Field; The Merchant Seeking Good Pearls; The Net Cast into the Sea; Jesus Continues His Apostolic Journeys into Galilee; Conditions under Which the Disciples Are to Labor; Rules of Conduct When Visiting People among Whom They Labor; Punishment of Those Who Do Not Receive Them; Reward of Those Who Receive Them; The Apostles Go Out Preaching; Their Successes; Death of John the Baptist; The Apostles Return; "Come apart into a desert place"; On Lake Genesareth; Jesus Feeds Five Thousand in a Miraculous Manner; Storm on the Lake; Jesus Walks upon the Waters; Stills the Storm; The Sinking Peter; Jesus Rescues Him; Cry of the Apostles: "Indeed Thou art the Son of God!" (Mark iv; Matt. xiii, x; Mark vi; Matt. xiv; John vi.)*

With the visit to Capernaum which followed the Sermon on the Mount, Our Lord began the method He pursued ever after of teaching by means of parables. The parable as an art form is a species of story in which a problem is given to those who hear or read. This kind of discourse has the advantage of setting a truth visibly before the imagination in order to fix it more firmly in the mind. In the parable there is concealment, but concealment so slight that any serious attention will penetrate the veil. The Oriental mind has always encouraged parables. And with good effect too, since this mode of expression is brief and concrete and appeals to the fancy. As the parable was not an enigma, he who proposed one usually permitted his hearers to take a provisional glimpse of the line of development he intended to follow. It was often customary, therefore, to announce at the beginning the idea that was to be brought out.

Jesus had just left the house of Simon Peter at Capharnaum, where for some time He had been in conflict with the Pharisees. He desired a more tractable audience, and "going out of the house, sat by the seaside," as St. Matthew records. The people who followed Him crowded so close that He found it difficult to address them. Hence He entered a boat of one of the Apostles and instructed those on the shore by means of the following parables.

"Behold, the sower went forth to sow, and whilst he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air came and ate it up. And other some fell upon stony ground, where it had not much earth; and it shot up immediately, because it had no depth of earth. And when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it; and it yielded no fruit. And some fell upon good ground and brought forth good fruit, that grew up and increased and yielded, one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred."

Having concluded the parable, Our Lord arrested the attention of His hearers with the words: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." He gave no explanation to His listeners, letting them go away to ponder and discover for themselves the divine application. Alone with His Apostles, He expounded the different parts of the parable at their request. "To you it is given," He said, "to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to them it is not given. For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore do I speak to them in parables to the end that seeing they may perceive not, and hearing they may not understand."

The Saviour, it is evident, refers here only to such as are insincere and do not bring to God's word receptive minds and hearts. To insist, as some insist, on taking the words of Jesus

in their literal content in every instance is not only contrary to the spirit of the divine Teacher, but it is against the natural workings of the human mind. Who that has ever spoken or written would have his words always accepted in their literal meaning? Who would express ideas without assuming as granted certain margins for interpretation? Who would set thought to language at all without the guarantee of concessions to imagination, suggestion, and tropical speech? The human mind needs a certain free area for those operations of seeing and feeling that cannot be surrounded by a geometrical line, or expressed in the terms of a syllogism. Perhaps nine-tenths of the richest, most consoling, most inspiring truths ever put into human speech can be twisted out of their meaning by any superficial casuist. Interpretation of the words of Jesus, therefore, is not an unwarranted assumption on the part of the Church. The normal mind sees its reasonableness, even if the right were not set down as an Article of Faith.

Our Lord gave the explanation of the parable, comparing the seed to God's word; and the different kinds of soil in which it is sown symbolize the different dispositions of those to whom the truth of God is announced. He next spoke of His visible kingdom, the Church, in the three parables: The Good Seed and the Cockle; The Mustard Seed; The Leaven. After they had entered the house where they were staying, the Apostles selected the Good Seed and the Cockle for their Master's interpretation. The Saviour graciously favored them with a very complete exposition. "He that soweth the Good Seed is the Son of Man. And the field is the world. And the Good Seed are the children of the Kingdom [the Church], and the Cockle are the children of the wicked one," who as Bad Seed are planted among the Good Seed. "And the enemy that sowed them is the devil," whose chief work is to frustrate the growth and propagation of virtue. "But the harvest is the end of the



world," where there shall be a gathering together and a final segregation. "The reapers are the angels." In the final accounting the wicked shall be punished, the just shall be rewarded. The workers of iniquity shall be "cast into the furnace of fire. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

In a group of three similes, following the parables of the seed and the leaven, Jesus compared the Church to: (1) A treasure hidden in the field; (2) A merchant seeking good pearls; (3) A net cast into the sea. In the first, a man finds a precious object in a field. He hides this treasure and sells all his earthly possessions in order to buy the field. He desires ownership so ardently in order to satisfy his conscience in the possession of the treasure and, perhaps, to make sure of any future treasure-trove which might be concealed there. The motive for the possession of the land is not, of course, so much commended as the earnestness with which the finder sets out to secure the rights of ownership. The Jews have the incomparable treasure of God's Kingdom hidden in their fields. Many of them are unconscious of their great gift, or regard it with unconcern. The Gentiles will find it and will become the possessors of the treasure of faith which will be lost to the unbelievers forever.

"Again," said Jesus in the second of these similes, "the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls; who, when he hath found one pearl of great price, went his way and sold all that he had and bought it." So should the earnest searcher discard all partial truth, once he comes upon the unchangeable truth of the Kingdom of God.

And, finally, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a net cast into the sea and gathering together of all kinds of fishes; which when it was filled, they drew out, and sitting by the shore, they

chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth." The net cast into the sea was familiar to the fishermen of Lake Genesareth. It was dragged in through the waters by means of ropes at either end and caught all manner of fishes, which were assorted and classified after the net had been emptied. "So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out and shall separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

To satisfy Himself that the Apostles were giving attention to what He said, Jesus put the question: "Have you understood all these things?" They promptly answered, "Yes." "Therefore," concluded the Master, "every Scribe instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth out of his treasure new things and old." Which means, according to commentators on the Holy Scripture, that the true expositor of the Divine Word will have complete knowledge of the Old and the New Testament.

At the conclusion of all these comparisons, Jesus left Capharnaum and the shores of the lake and continued His Apostolic journeys. He went into Galilee, where from town to town He instructed the people in the synagogues, healing the sick and announcing the coming of His Kingdom. The details of these journeys have not come down to us in the narratives of the Evangelists.

It was, however, while on one of these holy excursions that the Master gathered the Apostles around Him in order to explain the conditions under which they were to labor. "Go ye not," He said to them, "into the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The Jews are to be the first object of this earlier Apostolate. "And going," continued Jesus, "preach, saying the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The

temporal part of their mission is set before them. "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils." They must be generous of their services, who themselves have been so plentifully blessed. "Freely have you received; freely give." Relative to poverty, He warns them: "Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff; for the workman is worthy of his meat." The Master follows up this advice with certain rules of conduct which the disciples are to observe when they visit with people during their travels. "And when you come into the house, salute it, saying, 'Peace be to this house,' and if that house be worthy, your peace shall come upon it, but if it be not worthy, your peace shall return to you." If not received, then "Going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Amen, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city."

The rules here laid down for these first announcers of the Kingdom, who are to have their following down the ages, are neither very exacting nor very elaborate. They are to live among those for whom they labor, and the blessings they bring to their hosts will be in proportion to the worthiness of these hosts themselves. The phrase "shake off the dust from your feet" comes out of the Jewish regulation that those who walked upon pagan ground were obliged to shake the earth from their shoes before they walked back into the land of their fathers, and means, of course, that the Apostles must in no way be beholden to the inhospitable.

There is a joyousness in the tone of Jesus when He refers to those who receive His servants with courtesy and graciousness. They accord to Himself the welcome which they give to His representatives. "He that receiveth you receiveth Me. And he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." He

that recognizes nobility is himself noble. The patron of the bard shares in the glory of the bard. Or as Jesus expresses it: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive the reward of a prophet." Or more explicitly, in the accounting of the moral order, "He that receiveth a just man in the name of a just man shall receive the reward of a just man." The least service rendered to the humblest representative of Jesus shall not go unrewarded. "And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

The Apostles went in every direction to prepare all hearts for the coming of God's Kingdom. They received an enthusiastic welcome everywhere as a result of their miracles, and their missions brought forth abundant fruit. Galilee was especially noted in responding to the religious movement which was carried on by these native sons of the province. There was yet much to be done, however, by these simple preachers before they could advance into Judea, the home of Judaism.

The name of Jesus was now on every tongue. Even Herod,<sup>1</sup> in his palace of splendor and pleasure, heard of Him. He feared that there might be truth in the report, which the people brought to him, that John the Baptist was come back to life, or Elias was returned to earth. "This is John the Baptist!" he cried out in his terror; "he is risen again from the dead."

The story of the Baptist's martyrdom has in it all the elements of the tragic. It was during an anniversary celebration of Herod that the brave John met his death. The nobles of the court, the generals of the army, had been invited to a great banquet, at the conclusion of which suggestive scenes and lascivious dances were presented to excite the evil passions of

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<sup>1</sup> Son of that Herod whose Massacre of the Innocents is described in Chap. II.

the banqueters. To add distinction to the feast, and perhaps to satisfy her vanity for theatrical display, the young Salome, daughter of the wife of Herod, Herodias, by her first husband, whom Herodias shamefully abandoned, presented herself in the banquet room. Her dance, graceful and seductive, excited the passionate admiration of the half-drunken Herod. He called the girl to his side and said out of his maudlin enthusiasm: "Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me I will give thee, though it be the half of my kingdom."

The offer was a tempting one, and the girl left the hall to consult with her mother. Herodias, who had for a long time nursed a personal bitterness against the Baptist, because he had denounced her adulterous marriage, told the young Salome to demand from Herod the head of John the Baptist on a dish. The request surprised and terrified the drunken king. But he had sworn and was too proud to break the mad oath. Executioners were accordingly sent to the prison cell of the Precursor, and in a few moments Herod was presented with the head of the brave John. It is no wonder that the ruler now raised the involuntary cry of terror, "It is John, whom I have beheaded!"

The Precursor was put to death late in the ministry of Jesus—perhaps toward the close of those three memorable years. Meanwhile the Apostles returned from their missions and rejoined the Saviour somewhere on the shores of Lake Genesareth. They were very sad, probably, on hearing of the death of John. Knowing the comfort afforded the spirit by seclusion and solitude, the Saviour said to them: "Come apart into a desert place and rest a little." Accordingly they entered a boat and went to a solitary place in the country of Bethsaida. As, however, the crowd which followed them could watch the boat from the shore, the Saviour had very little time with His Apostles after they landed at their destination. Eager multi-



tudes again pressed around Him, and the sight of this enthusiastic flock seeking their Shepherd touched the heart of Jesus. Instead, therefore, of sending the people away, that He might receive much-needed rest, He began to instruct them, speaking particularly of the divine Kingdom, which was even then at hand. As an unfailing part of His ministrations He worked miracles in favor of the sick who had come or had been brought to Him.

The hours sped rapidly under the glow of His wonderful eloquence. The people forgot their homes and their families as they listened to His consoling words. Late in the day, the Apostles, brought to a realization of practical needs, approached their Master and said: "This is a desert place, and the hour is now past. Send away the multitudes, that, going into the towns, they may buy themselves victuals." Jesus answered: "They have no need to go; give you them to eat." Philip assured his Master that even if the Apostles were to buy bread, two hundred pennyworth—the amount of money which they probably had—would be altogether inadequate. One of the more foreseeing of the families, however, that followed Jesus, had instructed a boy to bring with him five barley loaves and two fishes with which to satisfy their hunger later in the day. The food was set on the ground, the people placing themselves about in groups. Jesus blessed the victuals, and without any outward manifestation fed those simple people who had come from near and far to hear His holy message. The fragments left over were gathered up, and all those present realized they had been fed in the desert, away from home, as a result of divine power. It is small wonder they cried out as in one voice: "This is of a truth the Prophet that is come into the world!" Indeed, the enthusiasm of these five or more thousand people was such that the Saviour sent His Apostles to their boat, in which they went far out on the lake. When



they were gone, He spoke again to the assembled multitude and calmed their enthusiasm over any dreams they might have as to earthly kingship. Yielding to His advice, and thinking they would meet Him again next day, the people returned slowly to their homes.

Meantime, as on another occasion, a sudden storm, which arose on Lake Genesareth, prevented the Apostles from landing at a point in Bethsaida where they expected to meet their Master. Continuing their course through the hurricane, hoping perhaps to get to Capharnaum, they found themselves in dire distress. Jesus, who knew of their plight, walked from the shore out upon the waters in their direction. The sight of the Figure upon the waves frightened the Apostles, and it was only when they heard the well-known voice, "It is I; be not afraid," that they were assured. Peter expressing, perhaps, the thought of all, cried out: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters." The Master bade him come. The Apostle leaped upon the waves and began to walk, but when it seemed to him he was losing balance, he became frightened and the miracle was suspended. "Lord, save me!" cried the sinking Peter. "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" The words were at once a rebuke and an explanation of Peter's plight. And these Apostles after witnessing this new mercy of Jesus fell upon their knees and cried out in a supreme act of acceptance: "Indeed, Thou art the Son of God!"

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Be prepared to ask and answer five *when, why, where, how, or what* questions on the parables in this chapter.
2. Draw a general lesson from each of these parables.
3. Explain the words "The workman is worthy of his meat."
4. Recall the main points in the life of John the Baptist.
5. Against what virtue did Peter offend when he feared that he should sink?

## THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD

Parables	Where Spoken	Source
1. Children Sitting in the Market Place .....		Matt. xi:16-30
2. The Sower, the Cockle, the Grain of Mustard.....	Genesareth .....	Matt. xiii: 3-43
3. Hidden Treasure .....	" .....	Matt. xiii:44
4. Pearl of Great Price.....	" .....	Matt. xiii:45-46
5. Net Cast into the Sea.....	" .....	Matt. xiii:47-53
6. Unmerciful Servant .....	Capharnaum .....	Matt. xviii:23-35
7. Good Samaritan .....	Jerusalem .....	Luke x:30-37
8. Friend at Midnight .....	" .....	Luke xi: 5-13
9. Rich Fool.....	" .....	Luke xii: 16-34
10. Watchful Servants .....	" .....	Luke xii:36-48
11. Barren Fig Tree.....	" .....	Luke xiii: 6- 9
12. Great Supper.....	" .....	Luke xiv:16-24
13. Lost Sheep .....	" .....	{ Luke xv: 3- 7 Matt. xviii:12-13
14. Lost Piece of Money.....	" .....	Luke xv: 8-10
15. Prodigal Son .....	" .....	Luke xv:11-32
16. Unjust Steward.....	" .....	Luke xvi: 1-13
17. Rich Man and Lazarus.....	" .....	Luke xvi:19-31
18. Wicked Judge.....	" .....	Luke xviii: 1- 9
19. Pharisee and the Publican....	" .....	Luke xviii:10-14
20. Laborers in the Vineyard.....	" .....	Luke xx: 1-16
21. Ten Pounds .....	" .....	Luke xix:11-28
22. Two Sons.....	" .....	Matt. xxi:28-31
23. Wicked Husbandmen.....	" .....	{ Matt. xxi:33-44 Mark xii: 1-12
24. Marriage of the King's Son...Mount of Olives....		Matt. xxii: 1-14
25. Ten Virgins .....		Matt. xxv: 1-13
26. Talents.....		Matt. xxv:14-30

## THE MIRACLES OF OUR LORD

Miracles	Where Performed	Source
1. Christ Changes Water into Wine....	Cana .....	John ii
2. Christ Heals the Ruler's Son.....	" .....	John iv
3. Christ Delivers the Man from an Unclean Spirit .....	Capharnaum .....	Mark i
4. Christ Heals St. Peter's Mother-in-Law.....	Bethsaida .....	Matt. viii
5. Christ Stills the Storm at Sea.....	Genesareth .....	Matt. viii
6. The Devils Enter the Swine.....	Gadara .....	Matt. viii

7. Christ Heals the Paralytic.....Capharnaum .....Matt. ix
8. Christ Cures the Issue of Blood.....Genesareth .....Matt. ix
9. Christ Raises the Daughter of Jairus. Capharnaum .....Matt. ix
10. Christ Gives Sight to Two Blind Men. " .....Matt. ix
11. Christ Heals the Dumb Demoniac... " .....Matt. ix
12. Christ Heals the Man Sick for Thirty-eight Years at Bethsaida.....Jerusalem .....John v
13. Christ Heals the Man with the Withered Hand .....Capharnaum .....Matt. xii
14. Christ Cleanses the Leper.....Genesareth .....Matt. viii
15. Christ Heals the Centurion's Servant. Capharnaum .....Matt. viii
16. Christ Raises the Widow's Son.....Naim.....Luke vii
17. Christ Heals the Blind and Dumb Demoniac .....Galilee.....Matt. xii
18. Christ Feeds Five Thousand with Five Loaves .....Bethsaida .....John vi
19. Christ Walks on the Water.....Genesareth .....Matt. xiv
20. Christ Heals the Daughter of the Canaanite Woman.....Tyre .....Matt. xv
21. Christ Heals the Deaf and Dumb Man. Decapolis .....Mark vii
22. Christ Feeds Four Thousand with Seven Loaves .....On a mountain near Lake Genesareth..Matt. xv
23. Christ Gives Sight to a Blind Man...Bethsaida .....Mark viii
24. The Transfiguration .....Mt. Thabor .....Matt. xvii
25. Christ Cures the Lunatic Child.....Near Mt. Thabor..Matt. xvii
26. The Stater in the Fish's Mouth.....Capharnaum .....Matt. xvii
27. Christ Heals Ten Lepers.....Samaria .....Luke xvii
28. Christ Restores Sight to the Man Born Blind .....Jerusalem .....John ix
29. Christ Cures the Infirm Woman..... " .....Luke xiii
30. Christ Heals the Dropsical Man..... " .....Luke xiv
31. Christ Escapes from the Jews..... " .....John x
32. Christ Raises Lazarus from the Dead. Bethany .....John xi
33. Christ Gives Sight to Two Blind Men. Jericho .....{ Matt. xx  
Mark x  
Luke xviii
34. Christ Heals the Blind and the Lame in the Temple.....Jerusalem .....Matt. xxi
35. Christ Curses the Fig Tree.....Mt. of Olives.....Matt. xxi
36. Christ Restores the Ear of Malchus..Gethsemani .....Luke xxii
37. The Resurrection.....Jerusalem .....{ Matt. xxviii  
Mark xvi  
Luke xxiv  
John xx  
Mark xvi
38. The Ascension .....Bethany .....{ Luke xxiv  
Acts i

### XIII. CONTINUED OPPOSITION OF THE PHARISEES

*Seeking Jesus for Temporalities; Three Kinds of Listeners; True Bread of Life; Jews Misunderstand; The Bread of Truth; The Bread of the Eucharist; "Thou hast the words of eternal life"; Apostles Shelled Ears of Grain; Rebuked by the Pharisees and Defended by Jesus; Eating without Previous Washing of Hands; True Cleanliness Explained; Curing Man with Withered Hand on Sabbath Day; The Humility of the Woman Whose Daughter Was Possessed of a Devil; Curing the Deaf Mute; Second Multiplication. (John vi, Luke vi, Mark ii, Mark vii, Matt. xii, Matt. xv.)*

After Jesus had fed the multitudes He disappeared. The crowds that now invariably followed Him everywhere were much disappointed when they learned of His departure. This was especially true of a certain party of zealots who dreamed of a Messianic kingdom altogether temporal. From Tiberias these enthusiasts, ambitious for earthly royalty, secured boats which carried them to Capharnaum, where they found the divine Teacher preaching in the synagogue. Some of them approached Him and asked: "When camest Thou hither?" Their hopes and thoughts were centered on Jesus, not from any high spiritual motives, but because of the temporal favors they had received from Him, and because of the earthly royalty they hoped to see realized in Him. The Saviour rebuked all seeking and following Him in consideration of temporal benefits and human glory. These ambitious self-seekers, who would have the Son of God Made Man continue a perpetual thaumaturgy for them, must be disillusioned once for all. Feeding great gatherings of people in a miraculous way,

giving sight to a blind man and hearing to a man that is deaf, these are incidents—helps even—in the ministry of regenerating and saving the world. But they are not essential to the reconstruction of our fallen human nature. There is a greater food than even the multiplied food of the desert. “Amen, amen, I say to you, you seek Me not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you.”

Those who heard Him that day might be divided into three groups: His sincere followers, who had a right understanding of His personality and mission; those who followed Him and admired Him for the temporalities, for honors and worldly possessions, the multiplied loaves and fishes, and who would not accept Him at all if there were only the desert with its locusts and wild honey; those who were His open or concealed enemies, whose one aim was His final and absolute overthrow. In the very much vaster theater of the world at the present hour these lines of division may still be kept without much divergence.

Certain of the Jews, who belonged perhaps in the second group, came to Jesus and questioned Him sharply. “What sign, therefore, dost Thou show, that we may see and believe in Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Taking up their comparison, Jesus answered: “Amen, amen, I say to you, Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world.” This means that Jesus Himself is the spiritual bread and it is only through Him that the world is to live. His questioners, always so literal in their interpreta-

tion of the Saviour's words, misunderstood Him. "Lord," they said, "give us always this bread." They remembered the bread of the desert which came to them so easily and so plentifully when they were hungry and far from their homes. If only they could be fed with this bread always, they would not have to go through the irksome labor of planting and reaping. The prospect was enticing, and the eager cry, "Lord, give us always this bread," expressed the heart's wish. Jesus is more explicit now and says with simple directness: "I am the Bread of Life. He that cometh to Me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." The thought that so many will refuse to accept this food of the soul is not a comforting one. "But I said unto you that you also have seen Me, and you believe not." He remained silent for some moments and then cast His thoughts into the future. "All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will not cast out; because I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. Now this is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all that He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day. And this is the will of My Father that sent Me: that everyone that seeth the Son and believeth in Him may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day."

The deep, spiritual content of these words was entirely missed by these calculating Jews. They saw only a human Jesus, who lived and walked among them like other men. "Is not this Jesus," they complained in the reiterated words, "the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then saith He, 'I came down from heaven.?' " The Master heard them. "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me except the Father who hath sent Me draw him, and I will raise him up in the last day. . . . Everyone that hath



heard of the Father and hath learned cometh to Me. . . . Amen, amen, I say unto you, he that believeth in Me hath life everlasting! I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die. I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My Flesh, for the life of the world."

According to commentators, Jesus here distinguishes three kinds of spiritual bread. There is the bread which came down from heaven, "that if any man eat of it he may not die." This is the bread of truth that nourishes the soul. Truth is often spoken of as the food of the mind. Besides, Jesus tells of the bread, which is His Flesh, that He gives for the life of the world. As Flesh and Blood, He recreates supernatural life in us by His sacrifice on the Cross. Hence to live complete life in the Saviour we must be fed on His truth, must be redeemed, and restored to supernatural life by the sufferings of His Flesh. And finally there is the bread of the Eucharist, which is to nourish and sustain those redeemed through the great sacrifice on Calvary. Complete union, therefore, means incorporation with Jesus the Teacher, Jesus the Redeemer, and Jesus the Eucharistic Bread.

Practically all those present failed entirely to understand the sublime meaning of His words. The mystery of Christ's death and that of the Eucharist, which is so closely connected therewith, never entered their minds. "How," they asked in literal fashion, "can this man give us His Flesh to eat?" In His reply Jesus is more direct than ever. "Amen, amen, I say to you: except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life,

and I will raise him up in the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed." From all this the audience took only a carnal, literal meaning. Yet there is an astonishing reality in the words of Jesus. Human flesh is not indeed to be eaten, nor is blood still warm from the veins to be drunk. How then? Perhaps we too should be as literally minded as these Jews were, if that invisible miracle of the Eucharist had not been revealed to us to set aside all doubts forever. Later on, at the Last Supper, will be accomplished that divine reality of which those last words are the promise and the prophecy. All that His hearers could bring to the prophecy, however, was the fretful question: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?"

"There are some of you that believe not," declared Christ sadly. "Therefore, did I say to you that no man can come to Me unless it be given him by My Father." Disappointed and disillusioned, these ambitious politicians and would-be disciples withdrew. They had hoped for a Messiah who would bring them temporal restoration, not One whose mission was spiritual uplift.

The Saviour turned to His Apostles, when the others had departed, and said sadly: "Will you also go away?" The question was searching and wistful, but there was assurance in the brave answer of Peter, always so impulsive and so ardent: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." There was one, however, in this Apostolic group who even then, from the direct words of Christ Himself, did not partake in this generous act of faith. "Have I not chosen you twelve? And one of you is a devil." He referred, of course, to Judas.

One Sabbath day, some time after the setting forth of these

sublime truths about the Holy Eucharist, Our Lord and His Apostles were passing by a field of ripened grain. The Apostles were tired and hungry and picked some of the ears from the stems, shelled them between the palms of their hands, and ate the seeds. This custom exists in some European countries even today. Certain Pharisees who were in the company saw in the act an infraction of the law which forbade eating on the Sabbath day before offering up early devotions in the synagogue. "Why do you do that," they complained, "which is not lawful on the Sabbath days?" Others of them turned directly to the Master and said: "Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath days." Christ at once explained that necessity is above mere prescriptions of ritual.

"Have you never read what David did when he had need and was hungry himself and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God under Abiathar, the High Priest, and did eat the loaves of proposition, which it was not lawful to eat but for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath day the priests in the Temple break the Sabbath and are without blame?" The functions of the priests necessitated work that was truly servile, which according to the law was forbidden. "But I tell you," continued Jesus in a grand outburst, "that there is here a greater than the Temple!" Mere Sabbath regulations which were intended to promote uniformity in observance are not to be the guide-posts in the new dispensation. The spreading of the gospel is more important than the meticulous ritual of the Pharisees.

The controversy ended for the moment, but it was not long before another grave question of ritualistic observance was advanced. It was well known that the somewhat primitive disciples of Jesus had no scruples about eating without having

first washed their hands. "Why," again complained the Pharisees, "do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." Jesus replied to this objection with another. "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for your tradition? For God said through Moses: 'Honor thy father and thy mother; and he that shall curse father or mother, dying let him die.' But you say: 'If a man shall say to his father or his mother: "Let that wherewith I might have been able to assist thee be corban [that is to say, consecrated to God]," he is no longer suffered to do aught for his parents.' The tradition that you have invented maketh void, therefore, the commandment of God. And many other such like things you do." Creating a technicality in order to escape a duty to parents is surely more to be condemned than omitting to wash the hands before eating. Then the Saviour turned to His hearers and gave an exposition of true cleanliness before God. "Hear Me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him. But the things that come out from a man, those are the things that defile him. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." Afterwards His disciples complained to Jesus that the Pharisees were scandalized at His words. "Let them alone," the Saviour advised; "they are blind and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit." If it be unwise to follow any leader blindly, it becomes tragic when the leader is himself blind.

The following Sabbath Jesus again appeared in the synagogue. The Pharisees were there to meet Him for the express purpose of stirring up a fresh controversy. Nor were they to be disappointed. In the assembly was present a man with a paralyzed hand, who at once caught the attention of the Saviour. "Arise," He commanded, "and stand forth in the

midst." Then turning to His enemies who were present, He said: "I ask you if it be lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?" They gave Him no answer; for an affirmative reply would be an admission of the lawfulness of the miracle, and a negative one would run counter to universal experience. He then addressed to them this personal argument, which no one of them could refute: "What man shall there be among you that hath one sheep; and if the same fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not take hold on it and lift it up? How much better is a man than a sheep?" Then Jesus said to the paralytic: "Stretch forth thy hand." He obeyed, and presently his hand was completely restored. There is divided wonder here: first at the suddenness of the miracle; second at the Pharisees, who after witnessing the prodigy, instead of being changed in heart were only, as St. Luke expresses it, "filled with madness."

Jesus now made ready to flee for the time from the growing opposition of His enemies. He lived no more at Capharnaum, but wandered about the country districts of Judea and Galilee for some months. Then He went toward the northwest until He reached the country near Tyre and Sidon. There, in a section of territory outside the boundaries of Palestine, He hoped to escape the crowds which were continually following Him, as well as the consequent opposition of the upper-class Jews. He was not long in seclusion, however, when a woman, whose daughter was troubled with a devil, approached Him to solicit a cure. Out of her grief she called to the divine Healer: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David! My daughter is grievously troubled by a devil." The Apostles, to be relieved of her importunities, suggested that she be sent away at once. Thereupon we are presented an example of the testing of faith under a seeming repulse on the part of Jesus, and a persevering



humility on the part of the woman. Not often in His dealings with those who came to Him for relief did Jesus assume so stern an attitude. He was almost harsh. "Suffer first the children to be filled, for it is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs." The metaphor is crushing. Yet in the dust she becomes heroic. Her answer is a perfect expression of the humility that will not be denied. "Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters." "O woman," exclaimed Jesus in admiration, "great is thy faith. Be it done to thee as thou wilt; go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter."

Just how long the Saviour lingered around Tyre and Sidon we are not informed. There are many conjectures as to the different places He may have gone, but such speculation has no Scriptural warrant. Possibly, after an extended stay He journeyed leisurely toward Decapolis, where He cured the deaf mute by putting His fingers into his ears and touching the tongue with His spittle. In this, as in many other instances, the joy of the restored man was equaled by the admiration of those who witnessed the miracle. Again Jesus tried to escape the crowds, but they kept close and followed Him wherever He went.

A second time He multiplied bread to feed the thousands far from the help and comforts of their homes. A great following had surrounded Him, bringing with them their afflicted relatives and friends, whom Jesus cured. In their admiration for the miracles they witnessed and the comfort they felt from the sweetness of His words, they forgot weariness and hunger. "I have compassion on the multitudes," said the merciful Wonder-Worker, "because they continue with Me now three days and have not what to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way." The Apostles, who seem



to have forgotten another multitude mysteriously fed on a former occasion, made answer: "Whence then should we have so many loaves in the desert as to feed so great a multitude?" The seven loaves and the few fishes which the disciples had with them were produced and the people were commanded to sit down along the hillside. The food was blessed by the Master, was broken and distributed. And the four thousand men, besides the women and children, were fed and sent away satisfied to their homes.

### SUGGESTION

On Mark vii:15-16—"It is wrong to make these words of the Saviour the foundation of an attack upon the law of abstinence enforced by the Church. Even in spite of this declaration on the Master's part, it remains true that a man can be defiled by the nourishment he takes. Yet it is not that which enters into him which defiles him, but that which comes from his heart, namely, the sentiment he experiences while he eats. If one takes food that is forbidden by proper authority he is defiled by an act of rebellion; if it be an article of food bought at great expense he sins against the Christian spirit; if he takes it to excess, he sins against the first elements of morality. Without this reservation we should be forced to admit that Jesus here condemns all the prescriptions of Moses, approves of luxury, and does not discountenance intemperance."—Le Camus, *Life of Christ*, II, 121.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Why is it wrong for us to expect greater temporal successes merely because we are righteous?
2. In which group of listeners were the Apostles? The Pharisees?
3. Explain Christ's discourse on bread.
  - a) How many kinds are there?
  - b) What are they?
  - c) Why could not the Jews understand?
4. Why do you admire Peter?
5. Why does he seem more human than any of the other Apostles?
6. How can we avoid following the blind?
7. Why did Jesus treat so harshly the woman who besought Him to cure her daughter?

## XIV. ALONG THE JORDAN

*At Magdala; Asking a Sign from Heaven; His Answer; Cure of the Blind Man; At Caesarea; A Fruitful Mission; "Who do men say the Son of Man is?"; Peter's Answer; Christ's Eulogy and Commission; Peter Rebuked a Moment Later; The Spirit of Those Who Follow Jesus; Earthly Hopes of the Apostles Regarding Jesus Set Aside; Saviour's Attitude toward Those Who Are Ashamed of Him; The Near Approach of the Kingdom; End of the Discourses. (Matt. xvi; Mark viii.)*

After the second multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Our Lord crossed over Lake Genesareth and landed somewhere near Magdala, a little town not far from Capharnaum. The Sadducees and Pharisees, now implacable in their hatred, were there to meet Him. They at once demanded that He show a sign in the heavens to prove that He was the Son of God. They had witnessed numerous signs already. Miracles had been wrought which they had either heard of or seen; therefore the Saviour made answer to their demand: "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'Today there will be a storm, for the sky is red and lowering.' You know, then, how to discern the face of the sky; and can you not know the signs of the times?"

These men, who could look for signs to determine the conditions of the weather, which are not always unfailing, could not or would not see the unmistakable signs which indicated that the Son of God was come upon the earth. "A wicked and adulterous generation," continued Jesus sadly, "seeketh after a sign; and a sign shall not be given it but the sign of Jonas the prophet."

After these words He left, entered the boat of His Apos-

gles, and set out with them in a northerly direction. They coasted along the shore so well known to these fishermen, from which the town of Capharnaum looked out upon the untroubled waters of Lake Genesareth. As they plied their oars they had no glimpse into the mind of their Master. His soul must, even then, have been depressed by sad reflections; for now more than ever His enemies were seeking to destroy His influence in this land which He would make the new land of promise, enlightening the people by sublime doctrine, exalting them by miracles such as never before had been witnessed upon the earth. The Saviour spent some of the time, however, instructing the Apostles and warning them especially to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of the Sadducees and of Herod." These words came from the Divine Teacher at a moment when the Apostles' thoughts were entirely taken up with the very material subject of provisions. They had only one loaf of bread left. So they accepted literally the warning Jesus had just given them, and took His words to mean that they must not under any circumstances accept food from Scribes or Pharisees lest it might be defiled or even poisoned. It was not a new experience for them that Jesus should read their thoughts. "Why do you think within yourselves, O ye of little faith, for that you have no bread? Do you not yet understand? Have you still your heart blinded? Having eyes, see you not and having ears, hear you not? Neither do you remember, when I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up?" They answered "Twelve." "When also the seven loaves among four thousand, how many baskets of fragments took you up?" They replied "Seven." Then their Master explained to these simple followers of His that it was not to leaven in its literal meaning that He referred. Rather, the disciples must know,

the leaven He had in mind was nothing else than the secret jealousies and cabals of the Scribes and Pharisees. Others might prove false to Him, but the hearts of His devoted disciples must remain incorrupt. Trials would come to test their faith, and some of them would waver. But He warned them thus early to be watchful and not fail when the hour of temptation came.

No sooner had they landed at Bethsaida than some people came to Him, bringing a blind man. In order to avoid the assembling of a crowd Jesus took him by the hand and led him out of the town into the country. It is probable that the blind man did not come of his own accord, that he was urged to come, and that even when he did come, the necessary requisite of faith did not come with him. This is the reason, according to exegetes, why the miracle of restoration was worked gradually to correspond with the growth of faith in his soul. Jesus began by putting spittle over his eyes. Then placing His hands upon him, the Saviour asked him if he saw anything. "I see men," he answered, "as it were trees, walking." Jesus touched the eyes a second time, and the man's sight was completely restored. Sending him away, Our Lord gave him this simple admonition: "Go into thy house; and if thou enter into the town, tell nobody."

Without any further delay the Saviour passed along the banks of the Jordan by the eastern shore of the Waters of Merom to the regions where the sacred river has its source. He spent some time at the city of Caesarea Philippi and the small towns surrounding it; but no miracles are recorded as the result of His visit. The irresistible charm of His language, the character of His works, His gentleness and kindness, won over this half-idolatrous, half-Jewish people. Though no miracles were performed, the mission of Jesus there was, withal, eminently successful.

The Apostles had been traveling with Him now for some time. Did they fully believe in His divine Personality? Did they accept altogether His sacred Mission? Perhaps they shared somewhat in the hopes of the great majority of the Jews, that He was come to assume temporal rulership and to restore the kingdom of Israel. As these men had now become His definite followers, the Saviour put to them this direct question: "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" The Apostles gave the prevailing conjectures as to the person of Jesus: John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias, or some other prophet. The Saviour wished an expression of their own belief. "But who do you say that I am?" It was Peter who answered for all: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God." This brave answer of the direct, simple Peter touched the heart of his divine Master. It was a fervent, freely-spoken declaration which sums up in a sentence the divine character of Jesus. It was Peter—soon to be promoted to headship in the nascent Church—who formulated the great act of faith which has ever since become the faith of millions. The ardor of this faith, the enthusiasm of this testimony, quickened faith and enthusiasm in his fellow-fishermen. No doubt some of them believed and hoped and loved as much as he; but perhaps a native timidity, which did not find place in the fervent nature of Peter, quieted their enthusiasm and left them mute. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona," Jesus said in commendation, "because flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven." And following these words of high approval the Saviour conferred upon this Apostle the prerogatives of leadership in His Church, which are to be conferred also in all their fullness on Peter's successors through all ages. "And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Shortly after this formal announcement of Peter's leadership,

the Saviour spoke of the hatred of His enemies and the sufferings He must endure. He did not, as on former occasions, conceal His future humiliations and afflictions under cover of figures. "He spoke the word openly," and as a result the Apostles were overwhelmed. Peter, still exalted with the memory of the commendation he had just received, protested stoutly: "Lord, be it far from Thee; this shall not be unto Thee." "The Son of Man must suffer many things," declared Jesus with finality. Peter was insistent; his Master must not suffer. Then replied Jesus in a crushing rebuke: "Go behind Me, Satan; thou art a scandal unto Me; because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men."

The Saviour at once proceeded to the subject of sufferings borne for His sake. He made a sign to the people who were at some distance away to draw nearer and began with this thought, which epitomizes the way of life for all His future followers: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." The true followers of Jesus must therefore put aside all thoughts of human glory, pleasure, wealth, or power, and take up a life of denial, suffering, and abasement. "For whosoever will save his life," He went on, "shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel shall save it." Which, in brief, means that those who seek to better the material side of their existence to the detriment of the spiritual side, will lose their immortal souls; while those who pay strict attention to the spiritual, without being unduly solicitous about material things, will save body and soul and so fulfill God's divine plan.

Then follows that wonderful sentence which seems to sum up the meaning of all our striving to reach God: "For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for



his soul?" This of necessity should put an end to any earthly hopes the disciples may have still entertained about their Master. Earthly calculations and earthly advantages have no place in the Kingdom of God. All gain that is of earth falls with earth; such rewards as are of time come to an end with time. At the gateway of death we must leave all behind us and go out to God with only the record of our lives. Wealth, possessions, fame, what men plan for and strive for and are eager to possess, these things we must part with when our days are counted out here. The question which Jesus next put to His listeners is true forever: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?"

The Saviour pointedly expresses a truth about the attitude of His followers, which finds special application in the lives of people today. "He that shall be ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him when He shall come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

The day of His power, when Jesus shall manifest Himself, is not far off. In a little while many of those present will be witnesses of stirring events that shall revolutionize the thought of the world. "Amen, I say to you, there are some of them that stand here who shall not taste death till they see the Kingdom of God coming in power."

He brought His discourse to a close; and as on other occasions, so now there was divided opinion among His disciples. Some accepted the sublime, even if very difficult, truths which He had just announced. Others were unreceptive and censorious: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" They had not yet caught the divine enthusiasm of the true followers who in the coming time will joyfully give up their lives in the great service.

## STUDY TOPICS

1. Why did not the Apostles understand Jesus' words concerning the leaven of His enemies?
2. How may people effectively show that they really believe in Christ?
3. Relate instances that show Peter to be the logical head of the Church.
4. Mention the times when Peter was rebuked by the Saviour.
5. Recall former instances in which Christ spoke of human glory, pleasure, wealth, and power.
6. In two hundred words answer the question, "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?"

## XV. TRANSFIGURATION AND EVENTS FOLLOWING

*Jesus and His Three Chosen Apostles on Thabor; The Messiah Transfigured; Outward Signs of the Transfiguration; Words of St. Peter; Voice of the Eternal Father; "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of God be risen from the dead"; The Other Apostles Unable to Expel a Demon, Jesus Exorcises the Victim; Apostles Failed because of Their Unbelief; Reception at Capharnaum; Demand Didrachma Tax from Jesus; Instructs Peter How to Secure the Money; "Who is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Lesson of Humility; Sin of Scandal; Rules of Fraternal Charity; The Power of the Church to Forgive Sin; How Often Should We Forgive?; Parable of the King and the Wicked Servant Who Would Not Forgive a Fellow Servant; Mercy in the Church. (Matt. xvii; Mark ix; Luke ix; Matt. xviii.)*

Six or seven days after the discourse in which He foretold His death and extolled all sufferings borne for His sake, Our Lord went away quietly to Mount Thabor, accompanied by the three Apostles Peter, James, and John. It was probably toward evening when they reached this gracefully sloping incline, along which grew oak and turpentine trees.

Here occurred that divine manifestation which has come to be known as the Transfiguration. The supreme bliss of the soul of the Saviour was made manifest in the wonderful transformation of His body. His face shone as if illuminated, and His garments became as white as snow. Holding converse with Him were Moses, the lawgiver, and Elias, the prophet. The three watching Apostles were caught up in ecstasy as if they saw a direct vision of God. We are not told how long this time of supreme happiness continued; but we know that Peter, out of the fullness of his happiness, expressed the wish that the scene might never end. "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. If Thou

wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." Even as he expressed this wish a bright cloud enveloped them, and out of the cloud was heard the voice of the Eternal Father: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." The three Apostles fell prostrate to the ground; and it was only the touch of their beloved Master that reassured them.

The highly spiritualized mind of many a contemplative writer has represented Thabor and the great Vision in imagery that is not readily forgotten. For us it is enough to know that the Transfiguration was a brief glimpse of Christ in His glory; a momentary manifestation of what God's saints see always in the joy of possession. Holy souls here below have had some such manifestations; but by contrast they have also passed through abandonment and desolation when Christ the Consoler retired from them for a time. Thabor is never very far from Gethsemani; the light of the Mount so quickly fades out into the long gloom of the Garden. As Jesus and the three Apostles went down the mountain side together, they were silent for some time; and it was only when they neared the end of the slope that the Saviour said to the three favored ones: "Tell the vision to no man till the Son of Man be risen from the dead."

When they arrived in the valley immediately below the slope, they were abruptly brought face to face with opposition and conflict. A dispute had arisen between the other Apostles and the Scribes over the case of a boy possessed by a devil, whom the former were not able to exorcise. "What do you question about among you?" the Saviour asked when the crowd came running to Him.

Then from among the multitude came the father of the victim, quickened by new hope at the sight of Jesus. "Master,"

he said, falling on his knees, "I have brought my son to Thee, having a dumb spirit; I beseech Thee look upon my son, for he is my only one. And lo, a spirit seizeth him, and he suddenly crieth out, and he throweth him down, and teareth him, so that he foameth, and he falleth often into the fire and often into the water; he foameth and gnasheth with the teeth, and pineth away, and bruising him, he hardly departeth from him. And I spoke to Thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not."

Before addressing Himself directly to the father of the afflicted boy, Jesus rebuked those around Him for their laxity and want of faith. "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you?" Then to the father, "Bring hither thy son." When the boy had been brought to Him, Jesus stood in silence for some moments, observing the contortions which again came upon the epileptic. "How long time," He asked, "is it since this hath happened unto him?" The father answered, "From his infancy; and oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him. But if Thou canst do anything, help us, having compassion on us." Jesus, as on other occasions of miraculous cures, placed responsibility upon the petitioner. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." The father of the boy cried out in acceptance: "I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief."

Immediately the Divine Healer began the exorcism. "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him and enter not any more into him." At once the cries and spasms were renewed—the last efforts of the vanquished enemy about to be forced out of his stronghold. The victim fell prostrate and lay on the ground as if dead, while those around murmured in awe: "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand, raised him up, and gave him back to his father completely restored.

When the Apostles were alone with the Master, they desired

an explanation of their failure to cast out the evil spirit. "Why could not we cast him out?" they asked. "Because of your unbelief. For, amen, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain: 'Remove from hence, hither,' and it shall be removed; and nothing shall be impossible to you. But this kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting." By the use of this hyperbolic language Jesus wished to show the great power of faith.

The Saviour now journeyed back to Capharnaum, which He visited for the last time. The reception He received on this occasion from many of the citizens was cold, almost hostile. Scarcely had He and His Apostles entered the house where they were to stay when Peter was roughly challenged by the tax-gatherers of this tax-collecting center: "Doth not your Master pay the didrachmas?" Peter at once turned to the Saviour. No doubt Jesus had heard the challenge, for when the Apostle came to Him, He immediately asked: "What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom; of their own children or of strangers?" "Of strangers," Peter answered. "Then," said Jesus, "the children are free." It is not certain whether it was the Temple tax, or a civil tax collected by the Romans which was here demanded. In the Mosaic law every male Israelite from twenty to fifty years of age had to pay an annual tax to the support of the Temple. The Romans, who exercised a real rulership over the Jews, frequently imposed a tax on them for the support of the government. In the case of Jesus, the demand for the payment of either tax was obviously unjust. He was not obliged to pay Temple taxes, since He was the Lord of the Temple. Nor could He be required to pay civil taxes since He was the King of heaven and earth. "But," He said to His Apostle, "that we may not scandalize them, go to



the sea; and cast in a hook; and that fish which shall first come up, take; and when thou hast opened its mouth thou shalt find a stater; take that and give it to them for Me and thee."

The special confidence which Christ had been placing in Peter, and His referring to him as the head of His Church, quickened feelings of jealousy in the minds of the other Apostles. As a consequence there arose a violent dispute as to which of them was the greatest in the new Kingdom. The discussion was at its height when the Master, who had been absent for some time, joined them; and immediately they placed their difficulty before Him. "Who, thinkest Thou, is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus sat down, called the Apostles around Him, and gave them the following lesson in humility, which has ever since served as the theme of ascetic comment. "If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all." Then calling a little child from somewhere near by, the Saviour set it in the midst of the Apostles. Placing His hand upon the young head, He continued with divine serenity: "Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever shall receive one such child as this in My name receiveth Me. And whosoever shall receive Me receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me." The absence of vanity, self-seeking, and the wish to be unnoticed which children have by nature must be petitioned for and merited through grace by those who have reached more mature years. Humility, by strange paradox, is the virtue of accomplishment; pride, the vice of failure and defeat. Not only by God are the lowly selected to accomplish what is high and difficult, but

also by men. Generally, in the spiritual world, the seekers of place and power are rejected, and those who consider themselves wholly unworthy are given honor and responsibility. It is very often true that those who in their own judgment think they can accomplish much good in honorable positions are not succeeding even in the places of lesser trust which they occupy. All vice weakens spiritual vision; pride makes us blind altogether. The humble do not often fail, and when they do there is no disappointment; there is only greater shrinking and self-effacement. When the proud fail—and they do fail in the long run—there is complete collapse. Apostasies, heresies, defections from moral righteousness, are very generally traceable to pride. The humble who do not fail are always in an attitude of thankfulness to Almighty God that they have not failed. The proud are the sole authors of their own greatness.

From the virtue of humility, which is the natural virtue of children, the Divine Teacher passes on to scandal, a sin especially ruinous to the young. "Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come, but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh." In concrete language the Saviour points out the absolute necessity of suffering serious harm rather than be the cause of sin to others. Lose a hand, a foot, an eye—the loss will be small in comparison with having to meet God burdened with others' sins. The phrase, "For it must needs be that scandals come," does not imply necessity, but contingency. A day could pass in which not a single sin would be committed over the whole world. But such a day has not yet passed, and it is extremely unlikely that such a day ever will pass.

"And if thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life maimed

or lame than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. It is better for thee, having one eye, to enter into life than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.”

The Saviour is here, of course, referring directly to the Pharisees, who are ever ready to take scandal and equally ready to give it. His words, however, apply with equal force to all such as serve as the occasion for others to commit sin.

He next lays down the rules of fraternal charity. “But if thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them, tell the Church; and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.” Apart from the high spirituality contained in these rules for the correction of our erring brothers, there is also found the very important element of fair dealing. Too often we could well correct a wayward or sinning brother by a direct, judicious reminder to himself. But being cowardly, we put on an hypocritical appearance of zeal and carry our complaints immediately to those who represent authority in the Church; and so we fail to live up to the wise and manifestly fair regulations of Christ.

There is undoubtedly a great deal of so-called fraternal correction exercised by this lion’s-mouth method. A zealous attitude is assumed and an apologetic manner brought in, which are often not sincere. The act of wrongdoing is sometimes enlarged beyond recognition, or motivated to suit a prejudice. The words of Jesus set down a very direct rule. “If thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between

thee and him alone." The phrase "offend against thee" does not, of course, mean a personal wrong, but any sin which occasions serious scandal. Under such circumstances, we ourselves are bound to correct our fellow man; and if he shows no sign of improvement in his conduct, then we ought to bring the matter to the attention of those who by virtue of their position in the Church can correct the evil.

The right of the Church to forgive, or to withhold forgiveness for a just cause, is made plain from the words addressed to St. Peter, and through him to the other Apostles: "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven." Peter proposed a difficulty at this point relative to forgiveness by the Church as a whole, as well as by an individual. "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me and I forgive him? Till seven times?" The Scribes, from certain Scriptural interpretations, limited their mercy to the third offense. The New Law, the Law of love and forgiveness, should carry pardon to the seventh time in the mind of Simon. The answer of Jesus gives no limit to the repetition of the act of mercy. "I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times."

Our Lord concludes the instruction by a parable of mercy and forgiveness, as contrasted with harshness and unmercifulness, which follows in direct sequence from the admonition to St. Peter that he should forgive his brother not "till seven times, but till seventy times seven." That is to say indefinitely, as the parable illustrates.

"Therefore," said Jesus, "is the Kingdom of Heaven likened to a king who would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him

that owed ten thousand talents [about ten million dollars]. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made." According to Jewish law an insolvent debtor with his family and property became the possession of his creditor for six years. In this instance the master was merciful. The servant, "falling down, besought him, saying: 'Have patience with me and I will pay thee all.' " The master heard his plea and showed mercy. The contrast that follows is pointed. A fellow servant owed this servant, who had been so readily forgiven, the sum of an hundred pence. It was a small amount—about sixteen dollars. "Pay what thou owest," commanded this servant who had so easily escaped the penalties of the insolvent debtor. Forgiveness was asked, and refused peremptorily. The master heard of this act, called the first servant quickly to account, and punished him as he deserved; not, however, for the non-payment of the debt, but for his want of mercy. "So also," said Jesus in applying the parable, "shall My Heavenly Father do to you if you forgive not everyone his brother from your hearts."

This parable, which represents an heroic example of forgiveness on the one hand, and of criminal unmercifulness on the other, fittingly illustrates all that the Saviour had been saying about the "quality of mercy" not being "strained." Indeed, in His dispensation, it flows down in plentiful streams. The Apostles themselves will be called upon to exercise this unlimited forgiveness in their preaching and teaching; Christ will give a divine example of it on the Cross; and in the Sacrament of Penance to be administered in the future Church, forgiveness will be sought for and obtained without stint or limit.

## STUDY TOPICS

1. Why could not the disciples cast out the devil?
2. In how many instances has Christ cast out devils?
3. Do we ever hear of demoniacal possession today? Is it a punishment? (Review Luke iv:31-57.)
4. How may we become like little children?
5. What is scandal? Why is scandal so grave a sin?
6. To what extent are we bound to obey Christ's words about fraternal correction?
7. What power does Christ promise the Apostles?
8. State in your own words the rules laid down by Jesus for fraternal correction.
9. Review the parable of the King and the Wicked Servant.



## XVI. AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

*Meaning of the Feast; Relatives Urge Jesus to Attend; Leaves after the Caravans with a Few Disciples; "How doth this Man know the Scriptures?"; He Answers His Enemies; Refers to the Cure of the Paralytic; Judge Not According to Appearances; Instruction on the Last Day of the Festival; Dispute Concerning Him; Nicodemus Demands He Be Heard; Woman Taken in Adultery; Verdict of Jesus; The Urn and the Candelabra Become Symbols to Explain the Divine Character of Jesus; His Testimony of Himself Is True; "Where is Thy Father?"; Words of Condemnation; Continual Interruption; Jesus Accused of Having a Devil; Cure of the Blind Man in the Temple; Reply of the Blind Man to the Judges; His Conversion. (John vii, viii, ix.)*

The Feast of Tabernacles was one of the great religious solemnities of the Jewish year. The day of the festival, which came early in October, was set apart to commemorate the wanderings of the Jews in the desert. It was a convenient time for the plain people. The harvests were then gathered in and the time of vintage over; and country folk were free to leave their houses and live in tents, the better to recall the wanderings of their ancestors.

Jerusalem during those days was given over entirely to the joys of the festival. The city was transformed into a camp of fervent pilgrims, who recalled the evidences of divine protection in songs and hymns sung during public processions. Palm branches were carried, symbolic of joy and triumph, and at every turn an accurate ceremonial helped to exalt the minds and revive the long-cherished hopes of the people of God. The morning libations in the Temple typified the water that leaped from the rock, and the two large candelabra were mute re-

minders of the pillar of fire that guided the wandering Israelites in the night. As the season was one of leisure, it was usual for vast crowds to assemble in Jerusalem to celebrate the great time.

Seeing numerous caravans pass by every hour, and hearing everywhere talk of the great Feast, relatives of Jesus came to Him somewhat excitedly and said: "Pass from hence and go into Judea, that Thy disciples also may see Thy works which Thou dost. For there is no man that doth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, manifest Thyself to the world." Jesus answered: "My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready." Their situations are quite different, as the Saviour explains. "The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I give testimony of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go you up to the festival day, but I go not up [now] to this festival day because My time is not accomplished." In other words, Jesus will go later on, but not at the present moment as his relatives urge. His people therefore departed, and Jesus remained in Galilee.

Not for a long time, however. For shortly after the departure of the caravans, He followed the pilgrims with a few disciples, so as not to attract attention while on the journey. But His fame had gone ahead, and the Jews of Jerusalem were waiting to receive Him, holding divided opinion about His person and character. Some said, "He is a good man," while others declared that He was a seducer of the people.

The Saviour appeared suddenly when the festival was at its height, and entering the Temple, at once began to preach. "How," cried the learned Jews in amazement, "doth this Man know letters, having never learned?" They knew Christ's family, His early boyhood, that He had never been a disciple,

that He had never studied publicly. He now surprised these Jews of Jerusalem, just as once before He had surprised His fellow townsmen of Nazareth. He had never made open profession of learning—had during the greater part of His life remained in the obscurity of a little village. How then could He, a mere Galilean, be a Master versed in the Scriptures? Yet here was He, with the aid of felicitous comparisons, giving such exposition of prophecy and doctrine as no teacher had ever before given in Judea. Where and how did He obtain such wealth of illustration, such sublime simplicity that charmed the great majority of His hearers?

The Redeemer divined their thoughts. "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of Him that sent him, he is true and there is no injustice in him." The Jews prided themselves on being the children of Moses, but Jesus well knew that they were not such in reality. "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?" Moses—or rather God through Moses—forbade them to kill, and yet they were seeking to kill their Saviour. Then He asked with sudden emphasis: "Why seek you to kill Me?" The multitude answered "Thou hast a devil; who seeketh to kill Thee?" This attitude of theirs was perhaps a mere simulation of ignorance; with some of them it was surely such. At any rate, the divine Teacher overlooked the insulting interruption and merely recalled the threats that were made against Him on a previous visit when He had cured the Paralytic. "One work I have done, and you all wonder." This work—one of essential charity—was objected to because it was performed on the Sabbath day, yet they themselves performed work much less necessary, that of circumcision, on the Sabbath. "Therefore," the Saviour reminded them, "Moses gave you circum-

cision; and on the Sabbath day you circumcise a man. If a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath day that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I have healed the whole man on the Sabbath day?" Then He set down for them a general truth which in all their relations with the Messiah they seem never to have remembered: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge just judgment." To all this His adversaries made no reply, though some of those in the crowd asked one another: "Is not this He whom they seek to kill? And behold He speaketh openly and they say nothing to Him. . . . But we know this man whence He is. But when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence He is." Jesus advised them that they knew Him in His human nature, not in His divine. He told them whence He is and exhorted them to believe in Him. Then he added sadly: "Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to Him that sent Me; and where I am, thither you cannot come." How truly has this prophecy been fulfilled!

On the last and greatest day of the Festival, He appeared again in the Temple and spoke to those who surrounded Him. His words expressed an invitation to drink of the waters of truth from Himself, the fountain of everlasting truth. "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'"

Opinion at once turned in His favor. Some said: "This is the prophet indeed." Others went further and proclaimed Him the Christ. "This is the Christ." Then the old question of His birthplace became a source of troublesome dispute. "Doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Doth not the Scripture say that Christ cometh of the seed of David and from Bethlehem, the town where David was?" This ignorance of His birthplace is

an indication of the very general ignorance of the Jews as to the Person of their Messiah. St. John adds: "So there arose a dissension among the people because of Him."

When later on, Nicodemus demanded that the new Teacher be heard before He be apprehended and condemned, the answer of the rulers betrays at once minds blinded by prejudice and hate: "Art thou also a Galilean? Search the Scriptures and see that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not." The question shows ignorance and intolerance; for if they were such studious pursuers of the Holy Scriptures as they pretended, they must have known that this Prophet had not come out of Galilee. Evidently, too, this lofty attitude they assumed had for its chief purpose to intimidate the shrinking Nicodemus.

The following day the great Teacher appeared before day-break and continued His preaching. While He was addressing those who surrounded Him, there was brought into His presence a woman charged with the crime of adultery. Certain Scribes and Pharisees were the accusers, and Jesus was constituted the Judge. This concession, which might seem an act of courtesy, was in reality an act of concealed treachery.

"Master," they said in their most hypocritical manner, "this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest Thou?" They supposed that Jesus, so well known for His spirit of mercifulness, would forgive the woman her sin. Then He would set Himself in opposition to the law, which He declared He had not come to destroy, but to fulfill. If, on the other hand, He condemned her, His action would run counter to His preachments of forgiveness of the sinner.

He waited for a brief space, then reached over and wrote on the ground the names, according to commentators, of her accusers. They pressed Him for an answer. "He," exclaimed

the Saviour, "that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Then He wrote a list of the sins of each accuser. The situation so created became intolerable, and the self-constituted witnesses left the Temple quietly and quickly. The woman went away forgiven, and the triumph of Jesus was complete. "Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord," she replied. "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more."

During the feast an urn of water was taken from the fountain of Siloe to commemorate the water that flowed from the rock at the command of Moses. And, as we have seen, two immense candelabra, lighted every evening in the women's court, recalled the miracle of the luminous cloud. Our Lord made use of both symbols to explain His own divine character. Referring to the water on the previous day, He said: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink." And now turning His thought to the light He exclaimed: "I am the Light of the World. He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life."

The Pharisees at once objected. "Thou givest testimony of Thyself; Thy testimony is not true." How they could conclude that because Christ testified in His own behalf His testimony was not true, is not apparent. In everyday life men are permitted to declare their origin and antecedents, and what they assert is not denied just because the assertion comes from themselves. And who better than the Saviour Himself could answer questions as to His nature and origin? In His reply Jesus gives stress to this. "Although I give testimony of Myself, My testimony is true; for I know whence I came and whither I go. You judge according to the flesh; I judge not any man" [in that manner]. Besides Jesus can call God the Father to confirm His testimony. "And if I do judge, My judg-



ment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me. And in your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that gave testimony of Myself, and the Father that sent Me giveth testimony of Me."

The Pharisees should not indeed have been ignorant of whom Jesus spoke when He mentioned His Father. On other occasions they had heard His references to the First Person of the Holy Trinity. They were prejudiced against Him, however, and prejudice shuts the mind to truth. Their next question is asked in order to snare Him in some false or inconsistent statement. "Where is Thy Father?" "Neither Me do you know, nor My Father," Jesus answered; "if you did know Me, perhaps you would know My Father also." If they believed in His divine personality as the Son of God, they could readily believe in His Eternal Father; but if Jesus is for them merely a man, then they know nothing about His origin and mission.

The Saviour continued to address these enemies of His in words that must have struck terror into their hardened hearts: "I go, and you shall seek Me, and you shall die in your sin. Whither I go you cannot come." They refuse the light, and the light shall shine for others. They will not accept Jesus; others will accept Him. He paid no heed to their interruption, "Will He kill Himself because He said, 'Whither I go you cannot come?'" but contented Himself with setting down their status in these words: "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."

The instruction was frequently broken into by these intolerant enemies, but the calm of Jesus was undisturbed. Thus when He said, "If you continue in my word you shall be My disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," they interrupted with the angry cry: "We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves

to any man." At once Jesus replied: "Amen, amen, I say unto you that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." When again they would silence Him with the protest, "Abraham is our father," Jesus retorted, "If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham." To the assertion that God is their spiritual Father, Jesus answered: "If God were your Father, you would indeed love Me; for from God I proceeded and came, for I came not of Myself, but He sent Me. . . . You are of your father, the devil; and the desires of your father you will do." Following this bold statement of condemnation He continued: "But if I say the truth, you believe Me not . . . If I say the truth to you, why do ye not believe Me?"

The fury of the crowd now broke forth. "Do not we say well that Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" "I have not a devil; but I honor My Father, and you have dishonored Me," Jesus answered in the same breath. Addressing Himself next to His more sympathetic listeners, He continued: "Amen, amen, I say to you, if any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever." Instead of placating them, these words added to the fury of His enemies. "Now we know," they clamored, "that Thou hast a devil." To their cry that Abraham and the prophets were dead, and that therefore He, not yet fifty years old, could not have seen them, Jesus answered with impressiveness: "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am." Abraham was of time, past, present, future. Jesus, the Eternal Son of God, knows no past, no future; He is the everlasting present.

As He was leaving the Temple and the aggressive crowd, Jesus noticed, in the place set apart for the beggars, a man who had been blind from his youth. "Rabbi," asked His disciples, "who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" They based their conjecture on the accepted be-

lief that the sins of parents are visited on their children. Our Lord at once corrected this age-old belief. "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." The Saviour spat on the ground, mingled the saliva with some of the earth, and applied the mixture to the eyes of the blind man. Then He said to him: "Go, wash in the Pool of Siloe." He went, washed, and returned cured. Our Lord and His disciples meantime had departed.

The neighbors, who for so long had seen this man moving about in his helpless condition, were amazed at the restoration. "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said yes; others said no, but someone resembling very much the blind beggar they all knew. They questioned the man himself, and he very readily removed all doubts. "I am he." Naturally they wished to know the circumstances of this sudden restoration, and the one-time blind man told them readily enough. "The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes and said to me: 'Go to the Pool of Siloe and wash.' I went, I washed, and I see."

They wished to meet this Miracle Worker, but the subject of the miracle could tell them nothing of his Benefactor's whereabouts. They conveyed the beggar to their leaders, who, they thought, would surely be able to enlighten them. The Pharisees questioned the man sharply as to how his sight was restored. His reply was terse and direct. "He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed and I see." Immediately there was divided opinion among the Pharisees themselves as to the character of the Wonder Worker. Some said: "This man is not of God, who keepeth not the Sabbath." The same objection will be brought up again and again by these rigorists in the months that are to follow. Others of them argued differently: "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?"

As for the restored man himself, he asserted without any hesitation when questioned, "He is a prophet."

The enemies of the Saviour were disconcerted and for want of any better subterfuge they sent for the beggar's parents. These were timid people, who admitted that the beggar was their son, and was born blind, but professed no knowledge as to how he was cured. "He is of age," they said; "let him speak for himself." St. John in his narrative is careful to give the reason for the parents' reticence. "These things the parents said, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed among themselves that if any man should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."

In the second encounter with the Pharisees the restored man is unmistakably the victor. The discussion between the insistent judges and unyielding beggar has in it the elements of humor. They begin with words of encouragement. "Give glory to God. We know that this Man is a sinner." The beggar keeps to facts. "If He be a sinner, I know not. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." The two questions that follow seem formulated to order to gain time. "What did He do to thee? How did He open thy eyes?" The cured man wastes no time in repetition. He shows a courage which the Pharisees no doubt consider outrageous impertinence. "I have told you already, and you have heard: why should you hear it again? Will you also become His disciples?" This challenge inflames the judges. "They reviled him therefore and said, 'Be thou His disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses; but as for this Man we know not from whence He is.'"

Perhaps the sentences that follow are not surpassed anywhere in the New Testament for a judicious interweaving of

logic and irony and a suggestion of humor. The cured beggar is answering his cross-examiners.

"Now we know that God doth not hear sinners: but if a man be a server of God, and doth His will, him He heareth.

"From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind.

"Unless this Man were of God, He could not do anything."

To this well formulated reasoning the Pharisees can only resort to the weak argument of physical force. They cast the beggar out of the synagogue. "Thou wast wholly born in sin and dost thou teach us?" The expulsion is a confession of defeat.

When the Saviour met the restored man later on, He asked him: "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" "Thou hast both seen Him," answered Jesus, "and it is He that talketh with thee." Falling prostrate at the feet of Jesus the Benefactor, he cried out: "I believe, Lord." Thus the victim was the recipient of a twofold favor: he was given physical sight, and, much more important, it was given him to see with the eyes of faith.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. What was the Feast of Tabernacles?
2. What did Jesus mean by the words, "My time is not yet come"?
3. Why did many of the Jews not believe that Christ is God?
4. Explain the figure of the living water.
5. Recall Nicodemus' visit to Christ.
6. What should we learn from the trial of the woman?
7. How may we become children of God?
8. What quality in the blind man merited his reward?
9. Review the discussion between the blind man and the Pharisees.
10. What does the beggar's expulsion from the synagogue indicate?

## XVII. APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS

*Discourse on the Good Shepherd; Conflict of Opinion; Faithless Cities Condemned; False Zeal of Disciples; Seeking Admission to Discipleship; Mission and Return of Disciples; Words of Consolation; "What must I do to possess eternal life?"; The Man Waylaid between Jerusalem and Jericho; Visit to Bethany; "Our Father who art in heaven"; Again Jesus Answers His Enemies. (John x; Matt. xi; Luke ix, x, xi; John x.)*

Following the cure of the blind man, Jesus remained some time in Jerusalem. One evening while outside the city walls He noticed the not unusual incident of Jewish life, a flock of sheep driven down the road from Bethany toward the city gates. The sight suggested an allegory. "Amen, amen, I say to you: He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber."

In the Orient of Christ's time, the sheepfold was an inclosure surrounded by palings, or a loosely constructed wall, to protect the sheep from wild beasts. In this inclosure several flocks belonging to different owners were kept, and usually one shepherd watched over all these sheep, carefully locking the door of the fold at night. In the morning each shepherd came, rapped on the gate, and had his flock released to him. The sheep knew the voice of their master, and followed when he called. This is the practice referred to when Christ says: "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep; to him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out. And when he hath let out his own sheep he goeth before them,



and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. But a stranger they follow not, but fly from him, because they know not the voice of strangers.”

Jesus then applies this figure. He proceeds from the life of the hill country to the life of the Church, from the Judean sheep-herder to the shepherd of souls. “Amen, amen, I say to you I am the door of the sheep.” His thought at once passes from the present and reaches into the future. “I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep.” And even as the sheep on the hill slopes of Judea knew their master, so will all true followers of Jesus know Him. “I know Mine, and Mine know Me, as the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for My sheep.”

His work is to gather in and to save. He comes not for one nation or for one race; He comes to bring light and salvation to all. And even as He called Andrew, John, James, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and at a later date the other Apostles; even as He was then selecting from every condition of life disciples to be His followers and announcers, so will He call, indirectly indeed, but not the less unmistakably, those thousands of both sexes in every age of His Church to whom He will entrust the high duty of propagating His doctrines and keeping His spirit alive in the world. Enemies will arise, even as they arose in the Saviour’s own time, to scatter and destroy the sheep, but the same Good Shepherd who watched and saved this first flock will not fail to watch and to save the more numerous flock of the coming time. Those who are outside the Fold, confused and astray, He will collect and bring in and save also. “And other sheep I have that are not of this fold; them also I must bring; and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one Fold and one Shepherd.” Jesus concluded His instruction,

the basic idea of which was the shepherd and the sheep, as represented by Himself and His followers, with a reference to His Death and Resurrection. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No man taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself; and I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received from My Father." And yet the sacrifice of Jesus was altogether voluntary, because His will and the will of the Father were one in the great work of Redemption.

As we have noted so often before, His words gave rise to conflicting opinions about Himself. Some cried out: "He hath a devil and is mad. Why hear you Him?" Others, recalling His unmistakable miracles, did not share this view. "These are not the words of one that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

Jesus left Jerusalem a few days later, after another attempt on the part of His enemies to stone Him, and went north into Galilee. As the time of His great sacrifice was nearing, He said farewell to the faithless cities through which He passed—cities that had witnessed so many divine manifestations, and still remained obdurate. Perhaps it was from the west shore of Lake Genesareth He apostrophized the cities of Corozain, Bethsaida, and Capharnaum in language that has some of the qualities of high lyric mood. "Woe to thee, Corozain! Woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance sitting in sackcloth and ashes. . . . And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted up to heaven? Thou shalt be thrust down even unto hell. For if in Sodom had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in thee, perhaps it had remained unto this day. But I say unto

you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."

On His way through certain Galilean cities, Jesus dispatched disciples ahead to prepare for His coming. One town—we are not told its name—refused to receive them. The disciples were so incensed at this inhospitality that John and James, the two more prominent among them, cried out: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" Jesus reproved this unmerciful zeal, the zeal of impulse, of wounded feelings, the false zeal which springs from personal slight. "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save." It is indeed difficult to overlook the personal element when the offense against authority is directed against the person holding authority. Those of subtle mind will say the offense against position must be punished, that against the person representing position must be obliterated or obscured. No doubt the distinction is well made, but in practice the lines of distinction will easily converge.

During the journeys from town to town recruits presented themselves to the Saviour. One of them, a Scribe, quickened by emotion, cried out: "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou shalt go." Neither encouraging nor yet repelling his ardor, Jesus simply reminded this enthusiast of the privations he must expect to encounter should he be admitted to discipleship. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air, nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." To another who would enter His service, Jesus extended an immediate invitation in the words, "Follow Me." "Suffer me first," he pleaded, "to go and to bury my father"—who was probably an old man. The would-be disciple wished to remain at home while this parent was still alive. The true follower of

Jesus must be willing to give up all in order to devote himself exclusively to so divine a service. "Let the dead bury their dead," answered the Master; "but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." "Let the dead bury their dead" is, of course, a figurative phrase, and means that temporal ministration must be taken care of by those who are not called to the ministration of the spirit. In battle, the soldier who fights leaves the burial of the dead to those who are appointed to render that service. His duty is to oppose the enemy and save the nation. So in the army of God, the soldier of Christ must fight the common enemy of man and save souls.

Yet a third presented himself who first wished to go home and take leave of his family and put his affairs in order. "No man," declared this exacting Master with finality, "putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God."

It was about this time, and perhaps during this Apostolic journey, that Our Lord appointed the seventy-two disciples to go before Him from city to city and to prepare for His coming. When they reached the banks of the Jordan on the frontier of Peraea, pointing to the vast country where lay the mountains of Galaad and the cities of Gadara and Gergesa, Jesus gave expression to this much quoted metaphor: "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send laborers into His harvest." These laborers are to go out armed only with trust in their great Leader. His words addressed to them have heartened many a preacher of the tidings ever since. "Go! Behold I send you as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse nor scrip nor shoes and salute no man by the way." They are to announce the tidings as they go. "The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." If people refuse them hospitality

they must not linger and plead. They are to say: "Even the very dust of your city that cleaveth to us we wipe off against you." If they are persecuted in one city, they shall flee into another. They must expect to encounter opposition, trials, persecutions, as did the Saviour Himself. "The disciple is not above the Master, nor the servant above his Lord." Their word is His word. To neglect, to set aside, to repudiate their teachings is to neglect, to set aside, to repudiate His. "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me. And he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me."

When the disciples, some time later, rejoined their Master and His group, they were very enthusiastic over the success of their mission. Even the devils were subject to them in His name. Jesus rejoiced in their successes and commended their triumphs. "I saw Satan," He said significantly, "like lightning falling from heaven. Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. But yet rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven." Power to accomplish miracles is from God, but to deserve this exceptional favor great personal sanctity is required of the recipient. And the follower of Jesus who performs mighty works in His name must beware of the ever-present temptation to pride.

As the Saviour looked across the country through which they were passing, He saw men laboring in the fields. The sight gave rise to this divine thought which has become a source of uplift and hope to the worn and the weary ever since. "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall

find rest to your souls, for my yoke is sweet and my burden light." Then turning suddenly to His disciples, He exclaimed in this rich poetry of retrospect: "Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see! For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them."

Our Saviour's success in Peraea was marked. He healed the sick brought to Him, and worked numerous other miracles. It was here, while He was instructing, that a Scribe arose and asked the all important question: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" The Saviour told him to consult the law, which, as a Scribe, he should know. There the love of God and man—God's image—is set down as essential. Perhaps for the sake of continuing the discussion, or for some other reason implied in the phrase, "to justify himself," the Scribe put another question: "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered this frequently asked question in the familiar story of the traveler robbed and beaten on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. The fourteen miles of highway that united the two cities was notorious for numerous bandits who waylaid merchants traveling back and forth, and the Saviour's narrative may have been based on an actual occurrence. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, who also stripped him [of money and clothing] and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead." His wounds resulted probably because of the resistance he offered when he was attacked. "And it chanced that a certain priest," who by his very profession should have been a man of mercy to serve and to save, "went down the same way; and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite," who because he served in the Temple and was occupied with



religious worship should have been kindly disposed, "when he was near the place and saw him, passed by." Finally, it chanced that "a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him" to find out his condition, "and seeing him, was moved with compassion." When he recognized his helpless state, he pitied, and immediately his sympathy took the form of service. He gave what present-day medical science calls "first aid," by pouring wine into the wounds to cleanse, and oil to soothe them; then he set his wounded neighbor upon his own beast and took him to an inn which he found in Jericho or perhaps along the highway. The despised Samaritan's mercy went yet further. He paid the host for the immediate care of the traveler, and promised to pay excess charge for any extra time or service. "Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee."

When Jesus had finished His story with the climax of the Samaritan's large charity, He said to the Scribe: "Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers?" The answer was inevitable: "He that showed mercy." So too was the lesson contained therein: "Go and do thou in like manner."

And now Jesus made yet another brief visit to Jerusalem. As on the occasion of His previous visit, He again set out quietly so as to arrive in time for the great Feast of Dedication. On the way He stopped at Bethany, less than two miles from the city, as the guest of His friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. From various hints in the gospel narrative, we may infer that comfort and happiness belonged in this house of Bethany. Yet, as in all happy homes, it was not mere material appointments that gave charm to the place, but the lovable personalities of the three who lived there. They were true friends

of Jesus, and whenever He visited them He was assured of a hospitable welcome.

The incident recorded in the Gospel brings out certain differences of character in the two sisters. Martha, busy with the details of entertainment for their distinguished Guest, moved quickly from one task to another. By contrast, Mary sat down near Jesus and drank in the divine flow of His conversation. Martha observed her unoccupied sister, and with the familiarity of long acquaintance, made a protest: "Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? Speak to her therefore that she may help me." The answer of Jesus has been quoted as a text for the contemplative life ever since: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her."

It was while on this visit to His three friends that Jesus taught His Apostles the "Our Father," that most comprehensive of all prayers. The favor came as the result of one of their number making this request of Him after He Himself had ceased praying: "Lord, teach us to pray." The "Our Father," which He recited for them, contains in substance praise, adoration, thanksgiving, and petition. Other beautiful prayers, the expression of the abiding faith and the ardent love of earnest followers of Jesus, have been composed to enrich the liturgical literature of the Church in every age; but as containing so vast an amount of the spiritual and the temporal in petition and praise, the "Our Father" stands alone and apart as the greatest prayer of all time.

Quitting Bethany, after a somewhat extended visit, the Master appeared in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Dedication, which took place toward the end of December. As on all

former occasions, He visited the Temple, where He walked back and forth in Solomon's porch; and at once His enemies among the upper-class Jews surrounded Him. They showed unmistakable impatience. "How long dost Thou hold our souls in suspense?" they shouted. "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Quietly, but unafraid, Jesus answered: "I speak to you and you believe not; the works that I do in the name of My Father, they give testimony of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not My sheep. My sheep hear My voice; and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one." In this last statement Jesus identifies Himself with God. To the Jews there listening, this was an unheard-of blasphemy, and at once they rushed out in search of stones to inflict upon Him the traditional punishment. Jesus remained where He was, and continued quietly: "Many good works I have showed you from My Father; for which of these works do you stone Me?" They answered: "For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." Jesus silenced His adversaries by pointing out the inconsistency of their attitude toward Him. "Is it not written in your law, 'I said you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the Word of God was spoken and the Scripture cannot be broken; do you say of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, 'Thou blasphemest' because I said I am the Son of God?"

He then pronounced a renewed declaration of His divinity in terms quite as clear as He had previously used: "If I do

not the works of My Father, believe Me not; but if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." These words, so explicit in their content, served only to renew the fury of those present. They were resolved to seize upon His Person, drag Him out of the Temple, and bring Him to justice for what they considered His unpardonable blasphemy. But the hour of expiation had not yet come; so He quietly escaped.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. Make a diagram of a sheepfold.
2. Explain the parable of the Good Shepherd.
3. How may the warning to Corozain and Bethsaida be applied to us?
4. What is it Jesus wishes those to have who would follow Him?
5. When should we take advantage of Christ's invitation to come to Him?
6. Narrate and explain the parable of the Good Samaritan.
7. What should we learn from the episode at the house of Mary and Martha?
8. What is included in the "Our Father"?
9. What is meant by the statement "Jesus identified Himself with God"?
10. How was death by stoning inflicted?

## XVIII. VISITS TO PERAEA

*Breakfast with the Pharisees; Externalism; Condemnation of the Scribes; Divine Providence; Professing Jesus; Beware of Covetousness; Story of the Rich Man; Treasures in Heaven; Divisions because of the Messiah; Second Visit to Peraea; Objections to Breaking the Law of the Sabbath; Dining with the Pharisees; Parable of the Great Supper; Barren Fig Tree; Other Parables; Resurrection of Lazarus; Sanhedrin Votes to Put Jesus to Death; Ten Lepers; Reward for Those Who Leave All for the Master's Sake; Third Visit to Peraea; Indissolubility of Marriage; "Suffer the little children to come to Me." (Luke xi, xii, xiii, xiv; John xi; Mark x; Luke xvii; Matt. xix.)*

At the conclusion of the great feast of Dedication, Jesus started back to Peraea to continue His work of evangelization and to meet yet again the opposition of His critics. It is quite probable that the mass of the Jews would have accepted His divine teachings in a docile spirit; but the people, managed by a sect openly against the Saviour, were kept in an attitude of hostility. It was upon the Pharisees, therefore, that the great responsibility for rejection chiefly rested.

He went toward the Jordan, intending, perhaps, to cross over near its entrance into the Dead Sea. On the journey, however, as He was passing the house of an influential Pharisee, He was asked to breakfast.<sup>1</sup> It is quite possible that curiosity to see the great Prophet was the motive which prompted this act of hospitality. The Saviour accepted the invitation to this least important meal of the day, because He was just passing through and people might not have another opportunity to meet Him. The host had gathered together a

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<sup>1</sup> While in the translation from the Vulgate the word *dine* is used, some exegetes are of the opinion that the Saviour was invited to the first meal of the day.

number of influential friends of his own sect who were anxious to see the Wonder-Worker of Nazareth; and in addition, some Scribes were called in, eager to test the powers of the young Prophet. They had heard of the strange character of His doctrines and the fearlessness of His manner and address; it was no secret that He held the Pharisaical rites in contempt, and not infrequently classed all the sects of the influential, upper-class Jews as hypocrites and the slaves of a ritual.

At the breakfast Jesus neglected the traditional ceremony of washing before eating, which caused the usual scandal to the Pharisees present. Seeing the horror expressed on their faces He reproached them in language that has been applied ever since to all the devotees of externalism. "Now you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within you are full of rapine and iniquity. You fools, did not He that made that which is without make also that which is within? . . . Woe to you, Pharisees, because you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over judgment and the charity of God. . . . Woe to you, Pharisees, because you love the uppermost seats in the synagogues and salutations in the market place." Finally, in a very strong simile, Jesus compares them to sepulchres that appear not, which men walk over unaware. The tithe mentioned refers to the law which obliged everyone to give one-tenth of the earth's produce to the support of the Temple. To show their zeal the Pharisees went further than this by requiring tithe taxes on such unimportant things as mint, rue, and anise.

One of the Scribes present declared with a sense of injured feelings that his profession should not be included in this general condemnation. "Master," he protested, "in saying these things Thou reproachest us also." The effect of his protest was to draw down a special condemnation upon the law-



yers. "Woe to you lawyers also, because you load men with heavy burdens which they cannot bear, and you yourselves touch not the packs with one of your fingers." Had this Scribe been silent, as in prudence he should have been, he and his profession might have escaped specific condemnation; and so we should have missed this picture of conditions in Jewish legal life by One so admirably fitted to sketch it for us. During the entire meal every effort was put forth to catch Jesus in some compromising statement, but without avail.

When the Saviour arose and went out, the indignant Pharisees hurried into the street and surrounded Him. "Beware," He said to His disciples who stood near, "of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; nor hidden that shall not be known. For whatsoever things you have spoken in darkness shall be published in the light; and that which you have spoken in the ear in the chambers shall be preached on the housetops. And I say to you, my friends, be not afraid of them who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you shall fear. Fear ye Him, who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell."

Jesus next spoke of the divine Providence that watches over all and has a care for each. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings [two and three-fifths cents], and not one of them is forgotten before God?" If divine Providence takes care of the birds that fly about the air, will He not also take care of His children? They who profess belief in Jesus shall have their own reward. "And I say to you, whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God." Those, on the other hand, who deny Jesus shall be disowned by Him. "But he that shall deny Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."

Just as He had finished speaking, one of those present put to the Saviour what he considered a very important family problem for solution. "Master," he complained, "speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." The mission of Jesus was not one dealing with temporalities. "Man," He answered, "who hath appointed Me judge or divider over you?" The element of selfishness in thus wishing to place Our Lord in the unpleasant position of domestic censor is apparent. No physical or spiritual malady was crying out for relief; no ignorance of mind was to be enlightened; no heart, worn out with grief and distress, made its appeal for comfort. A family quarrel over the division of property, with all its bitterness, grasping, and sordidness was this man's object when he urged the Saviour to speak to his brother. Jesus, the height and depth of all wisdom, declined to act as a go-between. The refusal should not be lost on all such as feel they have a natural fitness for settling the family quarrel.

From this incident the divine Teacher took occasion to give certain words of caution relative to the sin of avarice, which prompted the dispute. "Take heed and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth." This the Saviour graphically illustrated in the story of the rich man whose lands gave very great returns. He was embarrassed just how to make use of the surplus. The thought of the poor, who might thus be helped, never came to him. Instead he reasoned in this way: "This will I do: I will pull down my barns and will build greater; and into them I will gather all the things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul: 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest; eat, drink, and make good cheer.'" In his reckoning he left God out of consideration. But in His own time God said to

this selfish landowner: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Then Our Lord gave this advice, the result of the similitude, to His disciples; "Therefore, I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. The life is more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment." The appositeness of this parable to the rich of the present time is compelling. For surely it is as true today of many thousands, as it was then of the one singled out by Our Saviour, that their thoughts are essentially earthly and selfish. They get and spend, not only for the decencies and comforts of life, but for extravagances and orgies, with no thought of the less favored poor, with no sense of responsibility, or fear for the night when the soul must make its accounting.

It was during this second journey to Peraea that Jesus delivered those two beautiful similes based on the carefree ravens that fly about the air, and the lilies clothed with beauty surpassing the splendors of Solomon. In structure the two figures are very much alike. "Consider the ravens, for they sow not, neither do they reap; neither have they storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are you valuable than they?" If the carefree ravens, which are among the less useful of birds, are taken care of by God, why should man be unduly solicitous? Jesus, it should be remembered, is not so much approving the carefree way of looking at life, as He is sounding the note of warning against fussiness and nervousness and an over-eager attitude of mind.

The simile of the ravens has for its background a problem; that of the lilies is set in beauty. "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of

these." These similes are quite in keeping with His previous thoughts, the general application of which is supreme indifference to earthly things, and a looking upward to God as the great object of all our striving. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Jesus looked for a moment at His disciples, whose spirit was in such marked contrast to that of the Pharisees; then He said with tenderness: "Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a Kingdom. Sell what you possess and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not, where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Turning to all those around Him, the Master asked suddenly: "Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you no, but separation. For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against his father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." This division we find realized in every age of the Church's history. There have been and are divisions and separations among nations, among families. Some accept Jesus, others reject Him. Some accept Him in the fullness of His truth through acceptance of His Church; others accept Him partially or not at all.

The disciples thought the appalling condition here described was far off. Not so, Jesus assures them. "When you see a cloud rising from the west, presently you say a shower is coming, and so it happeneth. And when ye see the south wind

blow, you say there will be heat, and it cometh to pass. You know how to discern the face of the heaven and of the earth, but how is it that you do not discern this time?"

This visit of Christ to Peraea was as fruitful as His other visits, for we are informed that many came forward to profess their belief in Him. Yet here, as elsewhere, the Pharisees were in opposition. Thus while teaching in the synagogue one Sabbath day, when He cured an infirm woman, the usual objection was advanced about breaking the Sabbath. The ruler of the synagogue cried out in an angry tone: "Six days there are wherein you ought to work; in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Our Lord took this reproach, directly addressed to the people, to Himself. "Ye hypocrites," He replied, "doth not every one of you on the Sabbath day loose his ox or his ass from the manger and lead them to water? And ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Sometime later on, again on the Sabbath, He dined with an influential Pharisee. Others of the sect were also present, to whom Our Lord, mindful of their persistent objections to Sabbath-day healing, put the direct question: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" A dropsical man had already been brought into His presence for a cure, whom the Saviour freed from his affliction. No one answered. With a slight change of wording, He restated the case of the ox or the ass, to which every one of those Pharisees would bring relief on the Sabbath day.

While the company was still seated at the dinner table, Jesus cautioned the guests about taking first places at feasts—specifically mentioning wedding feasts—lest someone else more worthy should arrive and they be forced in shame to take a

lower place. As the meal progressed He narrated the parable which referred more directly to the host—the story of the man who made a great supper and invited many, only to receive frivolous excuses from those who would not accept his invitation. The first had bought a farm; the second possessed a yoke of oxen which he must try; the third was recently married and excused himself on the plea of duty to his home. The great supper was ready, the food would go to waste unless people were found who would show themselves willing to come and eat it. The poor, the feeble, the blind, and the lame were called; they came, and still there were vacant places. Servants were sent out over the countryside to compel all whom they met to be present at the dinner. The parable doubtless was not lost on His hearers. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews will cause the servants of Jesus to be sent to every part of the world to invite the Gentiles to the banquet room of the Church. They will not all respond to that invitation, but the response will be numerous enough to gratify the merciful Heart of Christ; and after the death of the first Apostles and disciples, others will take their places to continue proclaiming the invitation to the end of time.

The patience of God is long-enduring, as the parable of the barren fig tree, which the Saviour told shortly after, fully illustrates. To this period of Our Lord's life, too, belong also those parables of love and forgiveness, "The Lost Sheep," "The Prodigal Son," "The Lost Groat"; the parable of infidelity and condemnation, "The Unjust Steward"; the parable of contrasts, "The Rich Man and Lazarus"; and that contrasting humility and pride in "The Publican and the Pharisee," praying in the Temple. These parables we shall consider in the next chapter.

Then, as His ministrations continued, came the sad news



from Bethany that Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, was sick. The messenger sent by the two sisters hastened down toward the Jordan, crossed over into Peraea and said with exquisite delicacy when he met the Saviour: "Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick." Our Lord answered in the hearing of all those present: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it." He remained two days longer in Peraea, then suddenly said to His followers: "Lazarus, our friend, sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." He knew, of course, that Lazarus was already dead, but He spoke in figure as He did when He referred to the daughter of Jairus being asleep. The Apostles, misunderstanding the words of their Master, urged that there was no need to go if Lazarus were merely asleep. Wearied by their objections, the Saviour said plainly: "Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe." This was an implied promise to perform a miracle.

When they reached Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days, and the body was already in the tomb. The Evangelist, St. John, is careful to note that the Mary mentioned in the narrative "was she that anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair; whose brother Lazarus was sick." There is revealed to us the esteem in which the Saviour held the brother and sisters in the terse statement, "Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus."

A number of Jews—friends of the family, no doubt—were with the bereaved sisters when Jesus and His Apostles arrived. It is quite in character that Martha should have run out to meet the Master when she saw Him coming. "Lord," she declared, as soon as she had come within speaking distance of Him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not

died." But there is confidence in the words that immediately follow: "But now I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." "Thy brother shall rise again," is the comforting promise of Jesus. Martha adverts immediately to the final resurrection in which all orthodox Jews believed. "I know that he shall arise again in the resurrection at the last day." Then the Saviour, who alone can subdue death and snatch victory from the grave, makes His pronouncement which has proved a light and a comfort to all such as part at the dividing barriers between time and eternity: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live." In the next breath Jesus puts the thought negatively. "And everyone that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever." This belief in the general resurrection, in the power of Christ to bring back those who die in His love to the life of glory, is assented to by all followers of the Master. Hence Jesus asks immediately: "Believest thou this?" The reply of Martha is an expression of her faith in the divinity of Jesus, which includes the power of resurrection. "Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world."

After these very instructive and consoling considerations on final resurrection, Jesus turned His attention to the buried Lazarus. Martha sent for her sister who hastened to Jesus. Full of confidence, Mary fell at His feet now, even as in sorrow she prostrated herself before Him at the house of Simon, and as in adoring love she will kneel when she sees Him in the garden after the Resurrection. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Her human grief touched the human heart of Jesus. "Where have you laid him?" He went with those assembled to the tomb. "Behold how He loved him," they exclaimed in awe, seeing that Jesus wept. Some of them

remembered other great miracles of His. "Could not He that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die?" They should have remembered that in two instances, at least, He had brought back to life those already dead.

When they had reached the grave Jesus commanded, "Take away the stone." Martha's apologetic plea, that the body was already in the process of decay and not fit to be viewed, received a mild rebuke from Jesus: "Did I not say to thee that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?" The prayer of Jesus to the Eternal Father is one of thanksgiving and petition. "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always. But because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." The entire narrative reaches a sublime climax with the command of Jesus, "Lazarus, come forth." "And presently," concludes the Evangelist, "he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands; and his face was bound with a napkin." Jesus said to them: "Loose him and let him go."

The Evangelist says nothing about the touching scene that must have followed the reuniting of brother and sisters, nor are we given any glimpse of the after life of Lazarus. The glory of the miracle itself is only surpassed by the folly of the Scribes and Pharisees, who yet would not accept Jesus as the Son of God after witnessing this most exalted manifestation of His power.

The name of Jesus, as a result of this most striking of His miracles, was now spread everywhere. "What do we," His enemies asked, "for this Man doth many miracles? If we let Him alone so, all will believe Him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation." Why Jesus should

prove a reason for the Romans' exercising complete domination over the Jews is not altogether clear. Perhaps the leaders surmised that if the Messiah assumed the kingship of Judea, the Romans would put down the revolution and take away whatever measure of self-government the people then enjoyed. A meeting of the Sanhedrin was accordingly called, at which the high priest Caiphas cried out in the midst of the discussion: "You know nothing; neither do you consider that it is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." Then and there the Sanhedrin voted that Jesus should be put to death.

Presently the Saviour left Bethany, where He had been staying for some days, and went to Ephrem, a town situated near the desert of Judea. While there He instructed His Apostles, and at the same time fortified Himself for the final combat. He went from Ephrem north through Samaria, keeping close to the River Jordan, and preached at various places along the way. It was while making this journey that ten lepers came to him. They were afflicted with that terrible disease which not only degraded their bodies, but set them beyond the pale of ordinary social relationships. Their presence was a signal for flight to others, and their warning cry, "Unclean," was a declaration of their shame. The ten lepers stood afar off. A strict regulation forbade them to come near. "And [they] lifted up their voices, saying: 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.'"

No need to tell Him their disease. Their miserable condition was visible even at a distance. "Go, show yourselves to the priests," commanded the Saviour, in order to satisfy a strict regulation about being officially declared freed from the affliction. "And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean." Joyously they went to the house of the priest and received official permission to return to their families and to take up again their position

in human society. Nine of them, however, forgot their merciful Benefactor and hurried home to the embrace of their families. Only one sought the great Healer to return thanks. Jesus remembered the number that had cried out to Him in their woe. "Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger." Then came the assurance that not only was this Samaritan's body cleansed of leprosy, but also, and more important, his soul was cleansed of sin. "Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole."

The lesson of this Samaritan's act of thanksgiving, in direct contrast to the selfish forgetfulness of the nine companions, should not be lost on all who seek divine intervention in physical or spiritual maladies. It is well to seek the help of Jesus when afflicted in soul or body. If our prayers are not answered, we must be resigned to the will of an infinitely wise God, who always does what is best. If our prayers are answered, we must be very sure to return, renewed and rejoicing, to give thanks.

About the time of this striking miracle in favor of the ten lepers, a rich young patrician appeared before Jesus and asked the all-important question: "Good Master, what shall I do to possess everlasting life?" Jesus referred him to the commandments. "Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honor thy father and thy mother; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The young man had observed the commandments. "All these things I have kept from my youth. What is yet wanting to me?" "Yet one thing is wanting unto thee," Jesus advised him. "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." It was the call to discipleship in the great company of Jesus. But wealth and ease and the comforts of



home beckoned enticingly, and the young man faltered and went sadly away. It takes high courage to attend to, and still higher to pursue, the divine voice which invites to that difficult, remote, and sequestered life where Heaven is everything and God's love the one thing that is worth while. When the young ruler had gone Jesus took this incident as an occasion to emphasize for His hearers how great obstacles riches place in the way of salvation. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." Although the language used here is, of course, hyperbolic, the listeners took the words of the Saviour literally. "Who then can be saved?" Jesus gave this comforting answer: "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God."

Peter, recognizing in his own state the life before which the young man faltered, asked with his customary impulsiveness: "Behold, we have left all things and have followed Thee. What, therefore, shall we have?" It is of small concern how much or how little Peter left, nor should we scrutinize too critically his somewhat boastful words. It is so much more important that the answer of Jesus has ever since proved the inspiration and reward of millions of the faithful who have followed a life of seclusion and poverty in varying degrees of austerity. "Amen, I say to you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the Kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive much more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

When Our Lord reached the boundaries of Galilee, He crossed the Jordan and went again into Peraea. While He was on this visit the ever-present Pharisees set before Him the question: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" The answer of Jesus has been the answer of



the Church ever since, "What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Shortly afterwards, as if to show how truly He honored lawful marriage, the Master blessed little children brought to Him by their parents, and reproved those of His Apostles who would keep them away. "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Jesus is now ready to make His last journey to Jerusalem to celebrate the Paschal feast, stopping on the way at Jericho and Bethany. No more will He go along by the Jordan, or preach His divine tidings on the plains of Galilee. Already in the Holy City the clouds of opposition are gathering, so soon to break out in a storm of hate.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Summarize what has happened so far in Peraea.
2. Why would Our Lord's condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees be merited by many today?
3. Where has the figure of the leaven been used before?
4. In three hundred words show how you can fulfill in your own life the words of Jesus: "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man confess before the angels of God."
5. How may we place too much weight on family affairs?
6. What other words of Christ carry the same message as the parable of the rich man who had so much of this world's goods that he did not know what to do with them?
7. How could one carry to the extreme the advice implied in the parables of the raven and the lilies?
8. Explain the words "Make yourselves bags which do not grow old."
9. Do you think Lazarus remembered what he passed through while he was dead?
10. Locate Bethany and Ephrem on the map (page 28).
11. Was the leper who came back rewarded sufficiently?
12. To whom does Christ make the same reply that He made to the rich young man?
13. Who today leave home and everything for Christ's sake?

## XIX. A GROUP OF PARABLES

*Lost and Found; The Lost Sheep; Found by the Persevering Shepherd; This Parable a Reply to the Criticisms of the Pharisees; No Classes, No Masses, in the Embrace of Jesus; The Lost Groat; Found by the Solitude of the Housewife; Human Souls Are Coins in the Treasury of Jesus; So, Too, Every Soul Precious to the Church of the Saviour; Prodigal Son; His Insolence; His Rebellion; His Riotous Living; His Distress; His Repentance; His Return; Forgiveness of a Loving Father; Complaint of the Elder Son; The Father's Reply; Lesson of the Parable; The Spendthrift Steward; He Is Called to Account; His Expedient; Children of the World Wiser Than Children of Light; Pharisees Show Derision; Answer of Jesus; The Rich Man and Lazarus; Their Positions in Life; Reversal after Death; The Rich Man's Request to Abraham; The Reply, "They have Moses and the Prophets"; The Pharisee and the Publican; The Prayer of Each; Pharisee's Self-satisfied Condition of Mind; Humility and Contrition of the Publican; He Is Forgiven; Jesus Preaches Humility; Equality within His Kingdom. (Luke xv, xvi, xviii.)*

Six parables—three expanded somewhat beyond the length of the usual Gospel parable—we will now consider. It is not unfitting, perhaps, to group three of them under the general heading "Lost and Found": the lost sheep is brought home as a result of the sacrifice and perseverance of the shepherd; the lost groat is found after patient search by the housewife; the lost son finds himself, after privation, neglect, and homesickness, in the welcoming embrace of his father.

The parable of the Lost Sheep was, in effect, a reply to criticisms of the Pharisees and the Scribes because Jesus, through divine condescension, mingled with publicans and sinners in order to save them. "This Man," they objected, "receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

"What man of you," replied Jesus, "that hath an hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it?" The instinct of the true shepherd is to have all his sheep secure in the fold at night. If, for any reason, a sheep strays from the flock and is not in the fold when the sheep are counted, it is the duty of the shepherd to go back among the mountains and seek and find and bring home the strayed one. Christ is the Shepherd of souls. All have been created by God, the Eternal Father; all are to be redeemed by the Eternal Son. There are no classes, no masses, in the infinite embrace of Jesus. He came for all, and it is His divine purpose to save and to bring home the lost and the outcast. Judaism may distinguish sharply between God's chosen children and the unprivileged Gentiles. No such distinction is to exist in the religion of Christ, where all are welcomed into the one fold. "And when he hath found it, [doth he not] lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing; and coming home, call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: 'Rejoice with me because I have found my sheep that was lost.'?"

Finding a precious thing that has been lost is like acquiring a new possession; and the joy is not less. The shepherd rejoices that his search has been rewarded and—for joy is diffusive—calls his friends to him that they may have part in his joy. So the Good Shepherd of souls rejoices when He has won back and brought home the outcast and the sinner lost in the darkness of ignorance and sin. And as joy was in the hearts of the shepherd and his neighbors, so shall there be joy in heaven for all the lost that are saved. "I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." To be horrified because sinners are followed and sought

out with divine insistence, and because there is joy when they are found and made safe forever within the circle of divine mercy, arises out of pride, which never lets us see the heights and the depths and the infinite riches of God's love for His creatures.

In the parable of the shepherd compassion is the prime motive for the search. In that wherein the housewife loses her groat the element of zeal and, perhaps, self-interest, enters. "What woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it?" The groat is relatively so unimportant a coin that its loss should scarcely cause a second thought. Yet to this housewife it assumes such value that she searches long and earnestly and does not cease until she finds it. And moreover, like the shepherd, she calls her neighbors to share in her joy when, after the long, tiresome search, she comes upon it at last. "Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost."

The lesson of the parable is unmistakable. A soul in sin is a coin lost from God's treasury. To find every lost or wandering child of God, be he Jew or Gentile, public or private sinner, belongs in the ministrations of Jesus. St. Matthew, Zacheus, the thief on the cross, Mary Magdalen, and the woman taken in sin are to be sought out and found and saved. This is the unfailing doctrine of the Redeemer. "I came not to call the just but sinners to repentance." "There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."

The Church, following the mandate of her divine Spouse, must, and does, seek out the wandering and the lost. She is not established for respectable minorities; she cannot ignore or repudiate the ignorant, the fallen. Into prisons, into houses of correction, into the slums, to the foot of the scaffold, she

goes and seeks the wayward and the lost, to lift them up and minister to them and to give them assurance of divine forgiveness and benediction. The Church, indeed, is often reproached for her eagerness to answer the calls that come to her from the despised and the outcast. She is referred to with an implied censure as the Church of the foreigner, of the ignorant, of those thousands who have no claim to recognition except that they are God's creatures redeemed by the Blood of Jesus. That claim is enough for her. It should prove enough for all who believe in the Son of God made Man.

The parable of the Prodigal Son is a story set in domestic life. "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father: 'Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me.' " As a second son he had a right to a third of his father's fortune. According to the law of Moses<sup>1</sup> the rest was the portion of the eldest son. The desire for larger freedom and the wish to be away from his wholesome surroundings were the motives that inspired the young man to make this insolent demand. Because remonstrance would have had no restraining effect on him, the father "divided unto them his substance." The young man went away upon his own responsibility, as his own master, without consideration or regret for the parent he was leaving. He "went abroad into a far country; and there wasted his substance, living riotously." The first phase of the parable is the declaration of revolt against ordered life; the second is the carrying out of the declaration into act by wasteful and riotous living. Then, "after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with

<sup>1</sup> Deut. *xxi*, 17.

the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him." Here we have the third phase: the collapse of the rebellion, and the utter defeat of the young man. Out of his physical hunger comes the hunger of his heart for home. The ease and comfort and refinement of his former way of life are in marked contrast to the want and the filth of the life he is living now. He gives expression to this contrast when he says: "How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger!" In his present condition he remembers all the happiness of his former life, and from his reflection springs sorrow, and from sorrow, resolve—the fourth phase of the story. "I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am not worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants.'" He sets no conditions. He wishes only forgiveness, and will accept whatever penalty his father may place upon him for his waywardness and disobedience. Then in the fifth phase we have the mercy without stint or limit of the generous parent. "And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him, fell upon his neck, and kissed him." When they meet, the son confesses without making any excuse or defense: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son." The prodigal's sorrow was sincere; the father's mercy was generous. Out of his joy for the return of the lost one, he said to his servants: "Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry. Because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found." And so we have the prodigal's restoration, the sixth phase of the story.



The anger of the other son at the demonstration over his returned brother and his refusal to enter the house are not an essential part of this parable of sin and forgiveness. It is added as an answer to all those who in future ages will question God's great forgiveness, granted even to the most rebellious children if they sincerely seek His pardon.

Those who persevere in grace through the sustaining mercy of God must not complain that He wins back and restores strayed and fallen brothers. In the Father's house there are many mansions. The salvation of some sinful creature will not make less secure the inheritance of those who have always persevered. This good father's answer is an answer to all such: "Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine. But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is come to life again; he was lost, and is found."

The mercy of God toward His most sinful children, which this parable symbolizes, has so often been emphasized in sermons and Gospel exegeses that it seems superfluous to dwell upon it here. As pointed out already, Christ practiced mercy in the forgiveness extended to Magdalen, to the good thief, and to the woman taken in sin, whom the rigors of the Jewish law would have stoned. And ever since, in His relations with His rebellious followers, His mercy is poured out in plentiful streams. In the simple recital of this younger son, prodigal of his substance, and of the father, prodigal of his mercy, we have the practice of divine mercy epitomized in an unforgettable story.

In the next chapter, of the same Evangelist,<sup>1</sup> after He had presented the three parables just considered, Jesus added two others of a somewhat different content. The first is in direct

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvi.

contrast to the solicitude, zeal, and sincerity of the shepherd and the housewife. It presents an unfaithful steward who had wasted his master's goods. "There was a certain rich man who had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods." This steward was immediately called to answer these accusations. "And he called him and said to him: 'How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for now thou canst be steward no longer.'" Instead of feeling repentance for his wastefulness, which won forgiveness for the prodigal son, this steward plans new deceptions with the view of providing for his future when it was brought home to him that he must lose his position, with its wealth and its comforts. He reasoned in this manner: "What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able; to beg I am ashamed." Many unpaid debts were coming to his master, of which the master was ignorant, due to this steward's indolence and neglect. By canceling a portion of each one of these debtors' amounts, and appropriating what remained for himself, the steward would both add to his own income, and by virtue of the cancellations, would leave the debtors under obligation to him. "Calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: 'How much dost thou owe my lord?' 'An hundred barrels of oil.' 'Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another: 'And how much dost thou owe?' 'An hundred quarters of wheat.' 'Take thy bill and write eighty.'" So likewise, no doubt, he compromised with all the other debtors. The lord commended this unjust steward, not for his honesty, but for his cleverness. "And the lord commended the unjust steward for as much as he had done wisely" in making a worldly wise provision against the day of reckoning. Indeed, according to the divine Master, those in the service of the

world exercise more care and prevision about the things of time than do the servants of Jesus about the things of eternity. "For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

The Pharisees, notoriously avaricious, sneered at the words of instruction on covetousness and unfair dealing that followed. Jesus, noticing the derision on their faces, said: "You are they who justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is high to men is an abomination before God." By the use of another parable the Saviour made this plainer.

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen" — the symbols of power and luxury — "and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." This rich man typifies the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who live in costly houses and dine luxuriously. The neglected, forgotten poor who wait at the gates of the rich, begging a crust to sustain themselves, are represented by Lazarus. Then comes death, and conditions are reversed. "And it came to pass that the beggar died" before the rich man, and he was buried in an obscure, neglected grave as beggars were. "And the rich man also died," and was laid away with all the pomp and magnificence with which the rich are wont to surround unanswering clay. Those without faith, to whom the soul and eternity mean nothing, bestow expressions of their affection and grief upon the body. Those to whom the soul and salvation are everything have no concern for those embellishments that make less stern the reality of death.

The soul of Lazarus, which inhabited an unlovely body,

"was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." The soul of the rich man, who dressed in finery and feasted on the most appetizing foods, "was buried in hell." There is a sudden reversal. Lazarus is in glory; he has put away his repulsive flesh and is clothed in light. The rich epicure must live forever in hunger and thirst in the company of demons. The cry to Abraham—"Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue"—comes too late. "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos; so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, nor from thence come hither." Equally futile the request of this rich man, now lost irrevocably, that a word of warning be sent to his five brothers. "They have Moses and the prophets," is the answer. . . . "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead." Indeed, even then many of the Jews there present refused to believe the words of God Himself in the person of His divine Son. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus we have a contrast of positions both in the introductory presentation and in the sequel. In the sequel, however, we have a reversal. The beggar is in happiness, the rich epicure in everlasting woe.

The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican at prayer in the Temple is also one of contrasts. It is not so much a contrast of positions as of mental attitudes—self-satisfaction and pride against humility and a sense of guilt.

"Two men," began the Saviour, "went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican." In the prayer of the Pharisee there is suggested subtle irony on the part of the Saviour. "He prayed thus with himself: 'O God, I

give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as is also this Publican!" This is a eulogy on what, perhaps, we may call his negative attributes. Then he enumerates his positive accomplishments. "I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." The Pharisee paused here, quite satisfied with himself. What he records in his own favor passes beyond the limits of conceit and merges into impudence. He came, he asked for nothing, and he went away empty as he deserved.

"The Publican," continued Jesus, "standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes toward heaven, but struck his breast," as a sign of contrition. He cried, out of his grief, "'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'" His prayer was brief, but he asked for much in his petition—mercy and restoration. It was granted, as it always will be when petitioned for with a contrite and humble heart.

"I say to you," said the Great Teacher with divine authority, "this man went down into his house justified rather than the other; because everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

This glorification of humility Jesus expressed over and over again; in different words to be sure, but always with the same essential thought content. At one time it is in connection with taking the first places at feasts; at another time it is in the form of a correction to the Apostles when they have a childish dispute about priority; yet again it is to rebuke Salome when she seeks preferment for her sons. Always within the dominions of this King those who rule must rule as servants, and those who serve must never feel the bonds of vassalage where master and servant may share equally in the riches of the kingdom.

## STUDY TOPICS

1. Give the title of the six parables here mentioned and tell the lesson contained in each.
2. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, do you think the son who stayed at home had reason to complain? Why?
3. Tell the story of the Prodigal Son in your own words.
4. What virtues saved the Prodigal?
5. Prepare five questions on the material in this chapter. Know exactly what answers you expect.
6. Explain the words, "That which is high to men is an abomination before God." Illustrate by two or three examples.
7. Recall the number of times Christ praised humility.
8. How do those who rule in the Church rule as servants?
9. Do you know a title of the Sovereign Pontiff by which he is called a servant?
10. What similarity do you see between Our Lord's treatment of the lost sheep and a mother's care of a sick child?



## XX. PARABLES OF STRUGGLE AND PERSEVERANCE

*"Are they few that are saved?"; The Answer; The Gate of the Church Militant and of the Church Triumphant Open to All; Struggle Is a Condition for Salvation; "Lord, open to us"; The Plea; The Answer; Covenant of Jesus; His Reference to the Jews of Jerusalem Who Were Slain; Temporal Calamities Not Necessarily Punishments from God; Almighty God Long-suffering; Parable of the Fig Tree an Expression of God's Persevering Mercy; Explanation of the Parable; Leaving Father, Mother, Wife, Relatives, as a Condition for Discipleship; Meaning of These Words; Bearing the Cross after Jesus; Parable of the Man Building the Tower; Application; Convert's Necessary Instruction; Perseverance; Parable of the King Preparing to Wage War; Meaning of the Parable; Warning to Jesus to Beware of Herod; Answer of Jesus. (Luke xiii; xiv.)*

During an Apostolic journey following, perhaps, the discourse on the Eternal Banquet, one of His followers asked the Master, "Lord, are they few that are saved?" The answer of Jesus contains a warning which the saints of God have always kept before them: "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter and shall not be able." Entrance into the Church, the Kingdom of God on earth, has one gate, that of faith. Who does not enter by this will not enter at all. And considering the vast number of those outside the Church, who do not know this Kingdom of God on earth, or know it only imperfectly, the words of Jesus are not to be taken in a figurative sense. As to the Church triumphant, the kingdom of reward and fulfillment, rather than the kingdom of struggle and trial, to that also there is but a single gate of entrance—the perfection of charity in Jesus. Nothing

defiled can enter heaven. Salvation means union with God, and union with God means nature made perfect through grace. The gate of the Church militant, and the gate of the Church triumphant are open to all. But to some the door of each is closed because they do not make themselves fit to enter; others see the light, and having seen, follow it until they are safe home in the Kingdom of their Father. A mere passive attitude is not sufficient for salvation. Acceptance of the true Church, without carrying out in practice what the true Church teaches, will not secure us heaven. To be considered of the army of Jesus, we must fight as soldiers of Jesus against the devil, the world, and our own fallen nature. We must be Christians not only in name, but also in fact. We must profess Jesus by service as well as by words.

“You shall begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us.’ And He answering, shall say to you: ‘I know you not, whence you are.’ Then you shall begin to say: ‘We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets.’ And He shall say to you: ‘I know you not, whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.’”

About this time word came from Jerusalem that certain Galileans had been put to death in the Temple by Pilate’s order. The people were horrified at this sacrilege and voiced their outraged feelings before Jesus. He listened patiently as was His wont, and when they had concluded, expressed himself in these words: “Think you that these Galileans were sinners above all the men of Galilee, because they suffered such things? No, I say to you; but unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish.” No doubt these Galileans were not without guilt, as we may infer from the words of the Saviour. But Jesus is more disposed to be merciful to those who err through

uncontrolled nature as against those who sin deliberately and maliciously. By way of comparison He reminds His listeners of the other tragic events in their history in which the Jews of Jerusalem were the sufferers. "Of those eighteen upon whom the tower fell in Siloe, and slew them; think you that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem? No, I say to you; but except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish."

In the dealings of God with His creatures, temporal misfortunes, eruptions of nature, destruction by hurricane, fire, or sword, or any of the possible calamities which may come upon the world are not necessarily signs of God's anger or direct punishments from Him. More often they spring from natural forces and can be explained by human laws.

Almighty God is long-suffering and does not often punish the sinner visibly in this world. He stays His hand until the final accounting, preferring that justice wait upon mercy as the following parable, which Jesus relates, shows: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard: 'Behold for these three years I came seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I found none. Cut it down therefore; why cumbereth it the ground?' But he answering, said to him: 'Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and dung it. And if happily it bear fruit; but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.'"

This parable, as understood by exegetes, bears the following interpretation: By the vineyard is understood the whole world, and the Jewish race is the fig tree of promise. The fruit which the fig tree was counted on to yield may be considered as the good works expected from God's chosen people. These works were not, however, witnessed in any measure. Instead, the

great tree was found barren of fruit. Judaism cumbered the earth. It was warmed by the light of revelation, but failed to bring forth any fruit. Jehovah seemed almost to have decided to bring Judaism to an end. But Jesus, the vine-dresser, who came out of the Jewish race, interceded for His people. "Lord, let it alone this year also." The love of the Saviour went out to His countrymen, even though they refused to accept Him as their King and Redeemer. Time is granted so that the tree may still bear fruit. Jesus will continue to enrich the roots thereof with example and doctrine. Perhaps it will give a rich yield in the near future. The mercies of God are boundless and the pleading of Jesus irresistible. But in spite of both, the fig tree remained barren and had to be cut down at last.

When the Saviour again visited Peraea, where certain Peraeans asked Him to admit them to discipleship. The answer He gave them serves to emphasize the detachment which must distinguish those who enter His service. The words, however, are not to be understood as in any sense a command for the followers of Jesus to hate their parents and relatives. "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." We must, once we accept a place in the great company of Jesus, give Him exclusive, unremitting, service.

Discipleship means a willingness to serve and to suffer. "And whosoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." Everyone who enters the following of Jesus as a disciple, or less intimately as a believer in Him through the acceptance of Christianity, must do so with the realization that much will be demanded of him. To leave the service after one has entered it indicates imprudence and

instability. "Which of you, having in mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it? Lest after he hath laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying: 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"

To embrace the religion of Jesus requires, in addition to grace and enthusiasm, perseverance. We may be zealous to secure converts, in order to add to the glory of God and to increase the members of the faithful, but our zeal must not lead us to overlook seriousness and stability. Eagerness to bring strayed sheep into the fold must not lead us to overlook that examination of mental resources and that seriousness of purpose so essential to perseverance. Defections from the Church on the part of converts may often be traced to hurried and incomplete preparation. The advice of a great saint, "Make haste slowly," may surely be applied to his work by everyone who takes upon himself the responsibility of instructing prospective converts.

The Saviour changes the trope from tower building to warfare. In the first instance the wise man estimates the cost of construction before he begins to build, in order to assure himself that he will be able to finish the work. In the second, the wise king determines whether with the forces available he will be able to meet the enemy king who attacks him. "Or what king, about to make war against another king, doth not first sit down and think whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that with twenty thousand cometh against him? Or else whilst the other is yet afar off, sending an embassy, he desireth conditions of peace."

The thought here is, not that we are to seek peace with Satan,

our enemy, still less grow panicky lest we be overcome by him. Indeed, we are assured of victory through the help of Jesus. But the point Our Lord wishes to stress is that when we come into conflict with any of the enemies of our salvation, we must be prudent and secure the assistance of divine grace. "Watch and pray," "Have your loins girt," "Be always ready," are the watchwords of advice given us elsewhere by the same great Teacher.

One of the Pharisees present, perhaps for the purpose of intimidating the Saviour, said under the pretense of giving Him a friendly warning: "Depart and get thee hence, for Herod hath a mind to kill thee." Our Lord was not afraid. He could not be afraid. "Go," He answered, "and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils, and do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am consummated. Nevertheless, I must walk today and tomorrow and the day following, because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

It is useless to plot against Jesus. He will die when the hour comes, according to the divine plan. To Jerusalem he will go to be arrested, accused, and judged. But all this will come according to the eternal purpose for the world's redemption. Herod may fear Him and wish His destruction; the Scribes and Pharisees may hate Him and plot against Him. But—if we may refer again to His own imagery—He has laid down the foundations of His own tower and will finish the building. He is waging war against His enemy, and the war will cease only when the enemy is vanquished and the world redeemed.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. What is meant by the Church militant? The Church triumphant?
2. What was a common belief among the Jews about the infirmities of children?



3. Did Our Lord correct this belief? Give circumstances.
4. Give the exact wording of the Parable of the Fig Tree. Interpret in your own words.
5. What is meant by saying we must hate our father, our mother, and our other relatives, if we wish to become disciples of Jesus?
6. Our Lord speaks of building a tower. Where does He speak of the two kinds of foundations on which a man built a house? Quote the words. Interpret the parable.
7. What is meant by the parable of the king preparing to wage war?
8. What incident set down in this chapter emphasizes the courage of Christ?
9. Recount the incident of the Galileans who were slain in Jerusalem by Pilate's order.
10. Our Lord speaks of discipleship in service; mention some qualities of discipleship.

## XXI. WORDS OF COUNSEL TO HIS DISCIPLES

*Self-Denial; Not to Be Solicitous about Eating, Drinking, Dress; Divest Themselves of Possessions; Vigilance; Sense of Responsibility; Reward to Faithful Servants; Suddenness of the Accounting; The Faithful Steward; The Unfaithful Steward; Vincible and Invincible Ignorance; Sufferings for the Cause; "I am come to cast fire on the earth"; Mission Not One of Peace; Effect on Disciples. (Luke xii.)*

Here, perhaps, belong those words of counsel addressed by Jesus to His disciples of which we have a record in St. Luke's Gospel. They contain what may be called earnest invitations to higher sanctity for specially chosen souls. They call for the heroism of denial, that deeper spirituality in which we are lost in God by self-renouncement and self-effacement. The world, with very little time to think of eternity, may battle for what adds to human comfort and temporal prestige. The chosen followers of Jesus must seek, first of all, perfection in the Kingdom of God.

After advising the disciples not to be solicitous about what they eat or drink, illustrating how God takes care of His smallest creatures, even the birds and flowers, Jesus bids them keep in mind the one thing necessary—God's Kingdom. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."

His followers must divest themselves of possessions, setting an example of renouncement to saints of future ages. "Sell what you possess and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not. . . .

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Summoned as these disciples are to preach the Gospel over the whole world, they must shun the cares of business, and those material pursuits involving self-interest and thoughts of loss and gain. Whatever involves divided service cannot be tolerated in anyone who labors in the divine cause. With the exception of Judas, no one of those who received the call ever turned back or sought some other service.

Besides this spirit of detachment, which is an absolute requirement for discipleship, vigilance is yet another quality that may well be looked for in the true follower of the divine Master. "Let your loins be girt," He says, "and lamps burning in your hands." He makes us remember the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins in the image which He next sets before the minds of His disciples. "And [be] you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately." Those who so watch shall be rewarded as vigilant, persevering servants. "Blessed are those servants whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen, I say to you that he will gird himself and make them sit down to meat and passing will minister unto them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants."

The watchers of the King must not fall asleep in His service. A sense of responsibility, the consciousness of a great trust imposed upon them, keeps the eye wakeful, the ear ready to catch any slightest sound portending danger or treachery. God's great servants are jealous of His honor, they guard His treasures, they are proud and joyous to bear hardships in order to spread His name and His truth over the world. Sometimes they are called fanatics; and to the great mass of men in the

world they seem such. They are not, however, concerned about the judgments of the world, but about the judgments of God, whom they serve.

It is such true watchers that Jesus exalts when He tells His disciples: "Blessed are those servants whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching." He, their master, to whom they have so faithfully ministered, will become a minister unto them. He will have them sit down and eat while he serves them. Such is to be the happy lot of all the servants of God who in life have served. In death, when their Lord comes, they will be commended; they will sit at His table forever. Thus, under the figure of servants, are indicated all those chosen souls called to higher perfection in the service of the Master with heaven for their reward.

There is a salutary warning in the words that follow. The Master's coming may be at any hour. To test His servants, to see for Himself if they are faithful to duty, He will come at a time when they least look for Him. Happy for them if they are watching when He comes; but if they are sleeping, or spending themselves in any trivial occupation, they will be punished and rejected. "But this know ye, that if the householder did know at what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch and would not suffer his house to be broken open. Be you then also ready; for at what hour you think not the Son of Man will come." The thief trope is a favorite one with Jesus. "I will come like a thief in the night," "Where thieves cannot break through and steal," and other like comparisons are to be found in the Gospels.

Concretely, the coming of the thief is death. Death, we know, may come at any time, under the most peculiar, the most unexpected circumstances. The wise servants are always ready;

only the imprudent and foolish live in a state in which they would not wish to die.

Peter, who by virtue of his position may be said to speak for all the Apostles, wished to know if the reward promised to God's faithful servants is destined for the Apostles only or for every faithful soul in the Church. "Lord, dost Thou speak this parable to us, or likewise to all?" The vigilance urged by Jesus is intended for such as watch and serve, no matter how high or low their place in the administration of spiritual or temporal affairs. Our Lord, however, did not give any direct answer to His Apostle, but put forth yet another question which bears on the same subject. "Who, thinkest thou, is the faithful and wise steward whom his lord setteth over his family to give them their measure of wheat in due season?" About five bushels of wheat were allowed to every servant once a month, and a special steward—"the faithful and wise steward" mentioned by Jesus—was given charge of the distribution. Blessed indeed is the steward who is just and honest in a position which affords such tempting opportunities for corruption. "Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord shall come, he shall find so doing. Verily, I say to you, he will set him over all that he possesseth."

In contrast with the wise, faithful steward is the unfaithful, cruel, spendthrift steward who has no thought of his master's possessions. He shall be removed from office and placed with the wicked. Such a servant will say in his heart: "'My lord is long a-coming'; and shall begin to strike the men-servants and maid-servants, and to eat and to drink and be drunk. The lord of that servant will come in the day that he hopeth not, and at the hour that he knoweth not, and shall separate him and shall appoint him his portion with unbelievers."

Jesus next sets down the principle that ignorance, when not culpable, palliates the wrong of the evildoer and lessens his punishment. "And that servant who knew the will of his lord, and prepared not himself and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." The thought that follows is to become a great spiritual axiom for all the future ages. "And unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more." High office usually means great responsibilities. Commission implies accounting; accounting is followed by acceptance or rejection, reward or punishment.

These disciples whom Jesus has honored so signally in selecting them to carry on His work will be tested in the fires of tribulation. The new cause will call into the service its following of martyrs; there will be separation and exile, and many a time the shepherds will be called upon to summon all their courage and great resolves to keep the flock secure against thieves who would break through and steal. The truth of God must be cast abroad upon the world to set it aflame. The flame of Jesus will burn all outworn forms, all false beliefs, in order that there may be a great renewal. "I am come to cast fire on the earth and what will I but that it be kindled?"

The Saviour Himself is to give the great example of immolation. He will offer the first Blood to the Universal Truth. He will expiate, and His expiation will serve to fortify millions of others to go out singing to their death for Him. Everywhere over the world men and women spreading His truth will say, when the hour comes for them to suffer martyrdom for His Name's sake, "We but follow the way Our Master went." Jesus assures His disciples that He awaits with anxiety the hour



of His own death. "And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?"

His mission is not one of peace. "Think ye," He exclaims, "that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you no, but separation." The Apostles are soon to find a fulfillment of this prophecy in the death of Jesus, which will cause an earthly separation. Later on, the Apostles are to be separated from one another. And in the Pagan amphitheaters the first Christians will bid each other a joyous good-by, before they step out where the wild beasts are waiting to tear their bodies to pieces.

Naturally these words filled the minds of the disciples with sorrow and fear. To them the thought of the departure of the dear Master appeared hardly believable. They knew, indeed, what the prophets had foretold; they had heard from the lips of Jesus Himself about the death He must die. But just as many people will accept a disagreeable happening as tolerable if it be remote, and with a shrinking if it be near, so the disciples could consider without any very great distress of mind the Trial and Death of Jesus in some far-off, uncertain future, but with a sense of dread if brought near to them. This time Jesus spoke of the great expiation in terms of time and place by no means remote.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Explain the words, "Let your loins be girt, and your lamps burning in your hands."
2. Recount the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins.
3. Narrate the incidents in the life of Christ when those whom He asked to watch fell asleep.

4. Does Christ use the "thief" figure more than once? Recall the instances.

5. Compare Christ's words on ignorance with the maxim of civil authorities, "Ignorance of the law is no excuse."

6. On what other occasion has Christ stated that He did not come to bring peace on earth?

7. Should we look ahead for the sorrow that lies in wait for us? Why?

8. What might be the result if we became afraid of the future?

9. Who is meant by "the faithful steward" mentioned by Jesus?

10. How did the spendthrift steward act? Whom does he symbolize?

## XXII. PARABLE OF HIRING THE LABORERS

*Laborers First Called Given Specific Wage; Other Laborers Have No Agreement; All Paid Equally in the Evening; First-Hour Laborers Complain; Husbandman's Answer, "Friend, I do thee no wrong"; He Broke No Contract; That He Is Good Not a Cause for Complaint; The Attitude of the Workmen Is Rooted in Human Nature; Jealousy the Cause; There Must Be Gradation in All Life; Eternal Bliss Not the Reward Symbolized by the Penny; Faith, Grace, and the Sacraments the Reward for Laboring in the Vineyard of the Church; No Discontent in Heaven; People Called at All Hours; Not the Length of Service but the Quality of Service Is Important; Some Enter and Leave the Vineyard of the Church; Others Take Their Places; The First Shall Be Last; The Last First; Hope of Final Salvation for Those Called into the Vineyard. (Matt. xx.)*

In many of His parables Jesus chooses as His setting some activity in Jewish country life. In one we have the fisherman gathering into his net, and then assorting, the fishes taken from Lake Genesareth; in another the small farmer is scattering the seed out of the grain-sack suspended from a rope around his shoulders; or the harvester is taking home a rich yield to fill his barns; or the shepherd is bringing his sheep from the bleak hills to the warmth and security of the fold.

While the Saviour journeyed over the roads of Samaria and Galilee some months before His great Sacrifice, the season suggested a parable. The great rains were over; it was time to hire workmen to make ready the soil and spread the manure in order to insure a rich vintage. The parable of the laborers hired to work in the vineyard, illustrating service and reward, belongs to this period.

In this parable we have the complaint on the part of some of the wage-earners that compensation was not given justly, according to the hours of service. Those who worked only one hour were given the same wage as those who worked all the hours of the day.

"The Kingdom of Heaven," said Jesus by way of introduction, "is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the laborers for a penny a day"—that is to say, a stipulated wage—"he sent them into his vineyard." There was here a mutual agreement entered into freely by the owner and the workmen. For giving so many hours of service the laborers would be entitled to receive a uniform compensation. It was customary in the Palestine of Christ's time for workmen to go into the market place with the tools of their trade, and to stand there until someone needing their services came to hire them. The very fact that they brought their tools with them was a sign of unemployment. In the earlier hours of the day—the third hour, about nine o'clock—this householder went out again to the market place and saw others standing idle. "And he said to them: 'Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just.' " It does not seem from the words of the Saviour that any bargain was entered into about the amount of compensation to be given these and the other groups called in later. They were simply assured that they would be paid what would be just. The men seemed satisfied with this general promise and made their way to the vineyard. "And again he [the husbandman] went out about the sixth and the ninth hour"—noon and three o'clock—"and did in like manner." Finally, "about the eleventh hour"—five in the evening—"he went out and found others standing, and he said to them: 'Why stand you here all the day idle?' They say to

him: 'Because no man hath hired us.'” The fact that they remained all day with the tools of their trade seemed proof enough that they were eager to secure work. “Go ye also into my vineyard.” In this final call nothing is said about the compensation to be given. Quite possibly there was a uniform wage paid to the members of different trades for the time they worked.

Then came evening and the accounting. “And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward”—who had charge of the workmen—“ ‘Call the laborers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first.’ ” Every man, according to the instructions given to the steward, received a penny. “When therefore they were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more; and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it they murmured against the master of the house, saying: “These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us that have borne the burden of the day and the heats.”

At first sight their objection appears plausible. It does not seem equitable that one laborer should receive as much compensation for an hour at the same kind of work as another receives for eight or ten hours—especially, since there is no hint that the laborers who came into the garden late in the day were more skilled or more earnest workmen than those who gave a full day's service.

The weakness of the early-day workmen's argument does not arise from their objection to the unequal distribution of wages; for, ordinarily, time, ability, and good-will deserve compensation according to some uniform standard. The laborers called first, who worked all day, agreed to work for a

specific wage. They were paid that wage when the time came for settlement; hence the master's contract was fulfilled. That others who came later and worked less were paid equally with them was an act of consideration to the men who worked only a few hours or one hour, but no injustice to the men who gave full time.

The husbandman answered their objection in this way: "Friend, I do thee no wrong. Didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way. I will also give to this last even as to thee."

It is important to remember that the husbandman injured no one, broke no contract when he was generous. He paid what he agreed to pay those whom he hired first; to the others, who seem to have entered his employment without any contract, he was extremely generous, paying them full wages for a few hours' work. If these first laborers alone had been concerned, if the other groups had not been recompensed so generously, there would have been no protest, and the workmen would have gone home quite satisfied. They did not complain because they received so little, but because those others received so much. Their point of attack was not the master's injustice, but his generosity.

"Or is it not lawful for me," argued this husbandman, "to do what I will? Is thy eye evil because I am good?" Certainly the money with which he overpaid the laborers was his to dispose of as he saw fit. He could have spent it more selfishly, even, and no one could have reasonably objected. Possession usually presupposes the right of disposition. What is mine I may keep or give away; though I am not permitted to waste the benefits of God, who exercises supreme dominion.

The attitude of these objectors is inherent in human nature. Honors that come to others we view with a jealous eye, not so



much because those who receive them are unworthy, but because we feel we are outstripped in the race or set back in the accounting. Very generally people are quite satisfied with their positions until others who were their equals are ranked above them. Then come discontent and the wish to go up higher.

Obviously there must be gradations in every activity of human life. "All men are created equal" is accepted as an axiom. But almost from the moment men begin to act they show inequalities. They are not equal in service or accomplishment. They are not equal in talents, in concentration, in application; and the results they accomplish are rarely equal in number or kind. Men appear equal, perhaps, in the sense that often they have an even start and the same opportunities; but in a short time, usually, one man outstrips another in the race, and then equality ceases.

Very often our preachers and expositors identify the penny here given the laborers with eternal life. But we can hardly conceive those in possession of the beatific vision showing any least dissatisfaction because others are higher in bliss than they. Heaven, a state of eternal harmony and delight, would not be the heaven we are taught to strive for, if one soul's glory could contribute to another soul's regret. In the heaven of God, all—the least and the greatest—are in supreme contentment. The good thief brought in at the eleventh hour will cause no pangs of discontent in the hearts of the laborers who worked all day for the great cause. The same God who converts the sinner to a saint keeps the saint from becoming a sinner. "As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord."<sup>1</sup> Heaven is not a court of intrigue, jealousies, discontent. There is joy in salvation. One more

<sup>1</sup> Job i, 21.

sinner saved is an added evidence of God's mercy, and all the assemblage of the Blessed rejoice thereat. "I say to you that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance."<sup>1</sup>

In reality the call given to the workmen symbolizes the call sent out to the soul to work in the Church [the vineyard of the Messiah], and the reward is incorporation therein by Baptism. Many are brought in when the day of life is still in the morning. We may say that they are born into the faith. Others, less favored, stand outside, sincere and in a receptive disposition of soul. They are called in by conversion at the sixth, ninth, or eleventh hour; they respond joyously and give all the hours yet left to the service of the Master. The same possession of faith, the same sacraments, the same treasury of grace, await them when they enter, be the hours of their service long or short. And this is manifestly fair. Those who have been born into the faith of Jesus and have persevered in it all their lives have no just cause for complaint because one who waited all day in the market square is called in late and receives the fullness of faith and of grace for a brief time of service.

All people, no matter where they live or how circumstanced, are called to the faith. The Jews—the children of Israel—were the first to be invited. Some accepted the call and labored faithfully in the vineyard. The Apostles stand among the most distinguished of all who entered the service, and their names shine with especial splendor in the honor roll of the workers of God. But though the entire world of Judaism was selected in the early morning for long service within the vineyard, the great majority heeded not the invitation and still remain unhired. They still are idle in the market place.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xv, 7.

And through the long centuries of the life-day of the Church ever since, nations have entered the vineyard and have labored for a longer or a shorter period only to be misled into heresies and apostasies, and to dissipate their spiritual energy unmotivated by faith, unwarmed by love. For those who went out, others came in to fill their places; for those who stood listless, not heeding the call, there were others who gave joyous acceptance and promised an unremitting service. Always, in spite of defections, there have been those who waited eagerly outside and welcomed the divine call to enter the vineyard and labor for the life that "perishes not."

The grace of acceptance, however, does not imply the grace of predestination. We may be called into the vineyard of the Church, but we are not thereby confirmed in grace. While members of the Church of Christ on earth we receive the wages of faith as long as we labor dutifully in the vineyard. The length of time we work is not so important as the quality of the work we do. In the Church militant the wages of faith and grace are conditioned on unremitting service. When the Church militant merges into the Church triumphant faith becomes vision, struggle ends in victory, labor ceases in contemplation, and hope passes into the joy of possession.

For us it is important to heed the call. When or how or where that call comes, rests with God. But once called, every moment must be utilized, every talent must be set to multiplying itself, every grace thankfully received—a help to more and better service. How long we are to work, the kind of work we are set to do, are determined by an infinitely wise Mind. If called early into the service, we must work all the harder, keeping in mind the salutary warning that the first may be last; if late, we have the comforting alternative that the last may be first.

"Many are called but few are chosen" serves to sum up the moral lesson of the parable. Many are brought into the Church by the call of divine faith, but few are chosen for the Church triumphant by Jesus the Rewarder. Yet as the Saviour was speaking to the Jews, so many of whom refused to heed the call to His kingdom here on earth, it is probable He referred more particularly to them. Of His twelve Apostles, He said in His great prayer to the Eternal Father with a feeling of holy triumph: "Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept; and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled."<sup>1</sup>

And may we not dare to hope that of the much larger family of all the faithful, of all the ages, throughout the world the "sons of perdition" will not be so numerous in the final accounting? We have Our Lord's own blessed words to justify the hope, that He came not to call the just, but sinners, to repentance.

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<sup>1</sup> John xvii, 12.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Of what advantage was it to Our Lord to take His examples from Jewish life?
2. What other parable teaches the same lesson as the parable of the hiring of the laborers?
3. Why would you place blame on the workmen who worked all day?
4. What is your conception of Heaven?
5. Summarize the parable in your own words.
6. What lesson do you draw from the parable?
7. Give a brief *résumé* of the work of Jesus as told thus far.
8. How do you picture Christ?
9. Why cannot discontent find a place in heaven?
10. Why is the kind of service we give, rather than the length of time we serve, of first importance?

### XXIII. DAYS PRECEDING THE PASSION

*Journey to Jerusalem; Strange Request of Salome; Visit to Jericho; Jesus Cures Blind Beggar; Zacheus Is Promised Salvation; Parable of the Nobleman; Visits Bethany; Banquet in the House of Simon, the Leper; Final Stage of Journey to Jerusalem; Palm Branches Strewed on the Way; Rides into City on an Ass; "Rebuke Thy disciples"; The Barren Fig Tree; Drives Out Buyers and Sellers a Second Time; Deputation from Sanhedrin and Reply; Two-fold Kind of Obedience; Parable of the Householder; Parable of the Marriage Supper; The Coin of the Tribute; Case of the Seven Brothers Marrying Successively One Woman; The Great Commandment of the Law. (Mark x; Luke xviii; Matt. xx; Luke xix; John xii; Matt. xxvi; Mark xiv; Mark xi; Matt. xxi; Luke xx; Mark xii; Matt. xxii.)*

On His last journey to Jerusalem the Saviour and His Apostles met several caravans on their way to the Paschal feast. Jesus, however, walking ahead with certain of the disciples, kept to Himself. Bowed down with His own thoughts, He said sorrowfully to those who walked immediately near Him: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man."

Then by way of answer to a somewhat peculiar personal request, He gave very opportune spiritual counsel to His Apostles and disciples, who were to be the future guides of the faithful. Salome, wife of Zebedee, asked for preferment for her sons, James and John, in the Kingdom of Jesus. "Say," she pleaded, "that these my two sons may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left, in Thy Kingdom." The petition indicated a disposition of mind not suited to the kingdom

where the master must become servant, the servant master. It was rather wanting in that reserve we should look for in a mother whose sons have as their Master Him who is "meek and humble of heart." It was so direct, so outspoken, and betrayed a spirit so altogether at variance with the spirit of a follower of the Nazarene, that Jesus immediately restated how His true followers must account themselves. To this ambitious mother and her two sons He answered: "You know not what you ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of; or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?" Enthusiastic and hopeful, the two brothers assured Him they could. "You shall, indeed," answered the Master, encouragingly, "drink of the chalice that I drink of; and with the baptism wherewith I am baptized you shall be baptized. But to sit on My right or left hand is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father." Naturally the other Apostles were dissatisfied with the ambitious mother and her sons. In order that there may be no misapprehension as to what leadership among the followers of Jesus means, He sets up in contrast the manner of those who rule the Gentiles and the way to be followed by those who govern in His Kingdom. "You know that they who seem to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them. But it is not so among you; but whosoever will be greater shall be your minister; and whosoever will be first among you shall be the servant of all."

The caravans crossed the Jordan on the way out from Peraea and after a two-hours' journey over the yellow sand hills reached Jericho. Jesus entered the city then famous throughout all Palestine for its palms and roses. The town was set in an oasis of tropical vegetation with desert spaces stretching beyond. A noisy reception greeted Him as He passed along the streets; but even above the tumult came the cries of two



blind beggars.<sup>1</sup> "Oh Lord, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" Those on the outskirts of the crowd tried to silence these insistent mendicants, but all the more they kept up their plea for mercy. Jesus stopped for a moment and called them to Him. "What will ye that I do to you?" Their petition rose out of their hearts' depths and entered the Heart of Jesus. "Lord, that our eyes be opened." The cure that followed was complete and instantaneous when the divine Healer said, as He touched the eyes of each: "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Jesus did not, of course, come as a stranger into Jericho. His fame as a Preacher had gone ahead of Him; so had the stories of miracles performed by Him such as no one had ever performed before. Human nature then, as now, had the element of curiosity to stimulate inquiry. In consequence, a great crowd was lined up beside the narrow streets to see Jesus of Nazareth pass by. Not all in that crowd were enemies. Some were enthusiastic followers; some were well-wishers; the great majority were somewhat indifferent to His teaching, but curious to see a man who purified people from leprosy and brought the dead back to life.

Perhaps in this second group was Zacheus, the tax-gatherer, who, although personally well circumstanced, was not held in great respect by his townsmen because of the position he held. He climbed a sycamore tree to get a better view of the divine Prophet. The Saviour saw him and, much more important to the tax-gatherer, recognized the worthiness of his motives. "Zacheus," He called to him, "make haste and come down, for this day I must abide in thy house." To be so singled out

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<sup>1</sup> In recording this miracle St. Matthew says there were two blind men; whereas St. Mark and St. Luke mention only one. Again, St. Luke tells us that the miracle took place as the Saviour was entering the city. St. Matthew and St. Mark say it occurred as He was leaving Jericho.

was a striking honor, to which Zacheus responded with a promise of conversion and a closer fellowship with Jesus. His words imply some measure of wrongdoing; but whatever his defections, his humility is not short of the heroic: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold." Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." So the divine Teacher greeted His newly-made friend as He entered the house of the converted Zacheus. And so did He silence His critics who complained because He accepted the hospitality of a sinner.

Great masses of people were out next day to greet the Redeemer as He was about to continue His journey. He gave a farewell discourse foreshadowing His Death and Resurrection—the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself added possessions.

"A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. And calling his ten servants, he gave them ten pounds, and said to them, 'Trade till I come.' But his citizens hated him"—perhaps for the simple reason that he was a strict taskmaster—"and they sent an embassy after him, saying: 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' " When the nobleman returned after his sojourn in a foreign country, he called for an accounting. The first servant by wise investment had now ten pounds in place of the single pound he had received. The second, while not so successful, had, however, five pounds to show for his trading. The third man, being timid, had made no investment, and had only the original pound to show. By way of excuse, he tried to explain his lack of enterprise. "Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin; for I feared thee because thou art an austere

man. Thou takest up what thou didst not lay down and thou reapest that which thou didst not sow." His argument was a self-condemnation, as his master points out: "Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up what I laid not down and reaping that which I did not sow." He should accordingly have made some provision against the day of stern accounting. "And why then didst thou not give my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have exacted it with usury?" This improvident servant is deprived of his money, which is given to him who made a return of ten pounds. Because, as the nobleman answered to those who suggested that this successful servant had already ten pounds, "To everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him." The lesson of the parable has often been pointed out. We all receive gifts and graces, natural and supernatural. If we use them wisely, under the benign guidance and help of Almighty God we shall receive added favors, even heaven itself. If not we shall be held accountable and punished.

"But as for those my enemies," concluded the nobleman, "who would not have me reign over them, bring them hither and kill them before me." So, too, will God deal with those who set aside His divine Son as their Teacher and King.

From Jericho the pilgrims journeyed for some five hours over a lonesome, mountainous land, burrowed into here and there by steep, narrow defiles, where lurked the robbers and murderers that gave an evil name to the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. Toward evening, on the eve of the Sabbath, the party reached the foot of the last mountain slope, behind which the Holy City lay hidden. The caravans climbed the hill, but Jesus and His followers turned aside to Bethany, where they

remained over night with Lazarus and his sisters. This retreat into the seclusion of the house in Bethany with His dear friends is a consoling concession to human nature by the Redeemer of the World. There He found rest and comfort in conversation with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha before beginning those very active days immediately preceding His Passion. In His friendships, as in everything else, Jesus is the great Exemplar. Those three gentle spirits of Bethany were His special friends. He loved and valued them and always found rest and comfort in their home.

Next day a banquet was given in His honor by Simon the Leper, a relative of Lazarus and his sisters, and a personal friend of Jesus. As seen already, it was customary at all such banquets to anoint the invited guests. On this occasion, as on that other at Magdala, Mary Magdalen performed this ministration by pouring spikenard upon the head and feet of Jesus, and the odor was diffused all over the house. That first night at Magdala the Mary who performed the neglected ministrations was a public sinner looked upon with horror by all those present. But she braved their scorn and merited unconditional forgiveness. It is the same Mary who now anoints the feet and the head, but she is no longer that public sinner of the previous banquet; she is become the holy woman of Bethany. Judas, already lost to the warmth of divine grace, protested: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" Jesus is gentle even with His avaricious Apostle. "Why do you trouble this woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon Me. For the poor you have always with you; and whensoever you will you may do them good. But Me you have not always. . . . She hath done what she could. For she, in pouring this ointment upon My body, hath done it for My burial.

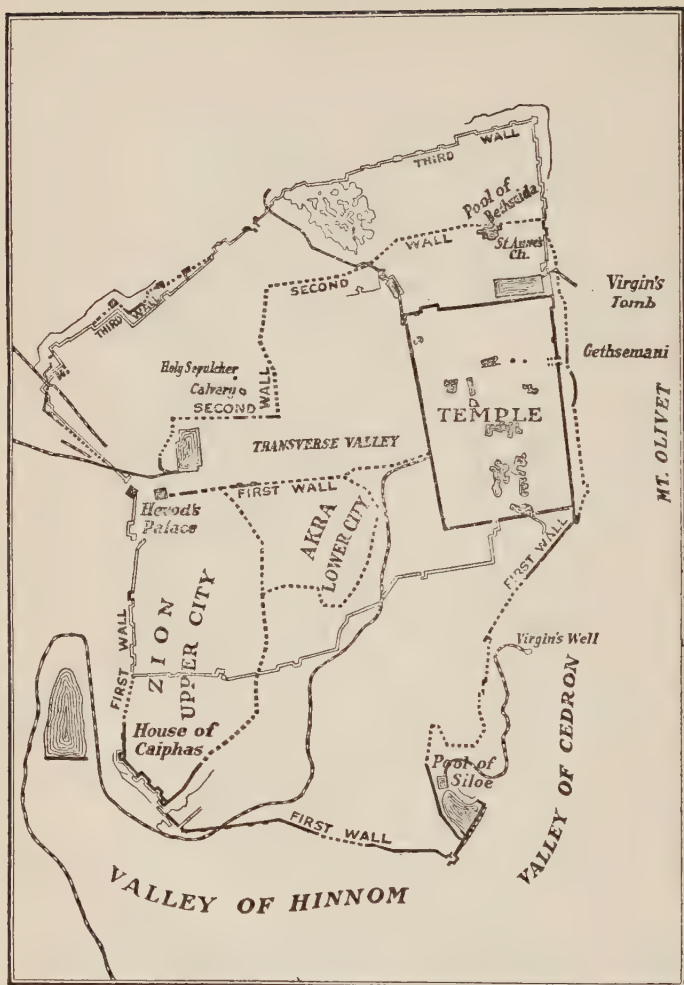
Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her." Thus Mary Magdalen's immortality was assured from the lips of divine Truth Himself.

About noon on the day following the Sabbath, Our Lord set out on the last mile and a half of the road to Jerusalem. Already crowds had assembled to join the little company in this final stage of the journey, and many of those who came cut branches from the palm trees of the Mount of Olives and brought them along to use in the traditional form of salutation. Before reaching the city Jesus said to two of His disciples: "Go into the village that is over against you, and immediately at your coming in thither, you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her upon which no man yet hath sat. Loose them and bring them to me. And if any man shall say to you, 'What are you doing?' say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go." The village referred to by the Saviour may have been Bethphage, which was near Jerusalem; and it is permissible to suppose the beasts which they were requested to bring belonged to some friend of Jesus.

The disciples brought the animals, one of which they covered with their best garments, and the Saviour entered the Holy City in the manner foretold in the prophecy, "Behold thy King will come to thee, the Just and Saviour; he is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."<sup>1</sup>

As the procession advanced into the streets shouts of greeting arose from all sides. "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Palm branches were waved in salutation, and garments, symbolic of a king's reception, were spread along the streets. Certain influential Jews—secret enemies, perhaps—protested at such extravagance. "I say to you," was the an-

<sup>1</sup> Zach. ix, 9.



PLAN OF JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF CHRIST



swer of this great spiritual King, "that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." The Man of Sorrows saw sorrow even in His triumph. When He beheld the city presenting in its ancient splendors a scene of such rich beauty, He gave voice to that apostrophe which has all the divine sadness that springs from a true love of country and race: "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee; and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children that are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." After visiting the Temple, Jesus went back to Bethany, where He spent the night.

On Monday, while returning to the city, He observed a fig tree luxuriant in leaves but showing no signs of fruit. Perhaps it reminded Him of Israel, so pretentious in its display of external religion, but without the fruits of genuine piety. Some writers infer from the words of St. Matthew that Jesus was hungry and approached the tree in the hope of finding some figs thereon. Then, noting its absolute barrenness, He cried out: "May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more forever." The tree withered, yielding neither leaf nor fruit thereafter. Next morning when the company again passed by the spot, St. Peter remembered. "Rabbi," he observed, "behold the fig tree which Thou didst curse is withered away." Jesus answered: "Have the faith of God. Amen, I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, 'Be thou removed and be cast into the sea' . . . it shall be done unto him."

He entered the Temple and again witnessed such scandalous scenes of traffic and trade as earlier in His ministry He had

so forcibly condemned. This time, however, He did not arm Himself with scourges, but by a look, a word, a gesture, sent the traffickers pell-mell through the doors, observing to the people who surrounded Him: "Is it not written: 'My house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations'?<sup>1</sup> But you have made it a den of thieves."<sup>2</sup> The enthusiasm at this manifestation of divine power was such that the people cried out anew, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Night found Him again in Bethany.

When Jesus visited the Temple on Tuesday He found a deputation from the Sanhedrin there to meet Him. They were indignant. "By what authority dost Thou these things?" They referred no doubt to the expulsion of the traffickers from the Temple. "I will also ask you one word," replied Jesus, "and answer you Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from Heaven or from men? Answer Me." They consulted among themselves. "If we say 'From Heaven,' He will say: 'Why then did you not believe him?' If we say 'Of men,' the whole people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." Accordingly they gave no answer. "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things," was the conclusive reply of Jesus.

Turning abruptly to the people, in whom He had more interest, the Saviour related the parable of the man who had two sons who gave him a twofold form of obedience. "And coming to the first, he said: 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.' And he, answering, said, 'I will not.' But afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went. And coming to the other he said in like manner. And he, answering, said, 'I go, sir,' and he went not. Which of the two did the father's will?" The people nearest answered promptly: "The first." Neither,

<sup>1</sup> Isaias lvi, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Jerem. vii, 11.

of course, gave what is called perfect obedience, though the first son had the virtue of repentance to counteract his impertinence.

Then turning to His adversaries, Jesus said to them: "Amen, I say to you that the publicans and harlots shall go into the Kingdom of God before you." To the throngs of people who stood around Him the Saviour told the parable of the householder who let out his vineyard to husbandmen, while he himself traveled to a strange country. When he returned, he sent a servant to collect his fruits, but the servant was mistreated and sent back empty. He sent a second, who fared no better. The third was killed. Finally, he sent his beloved son. Him they killed too. "When therefore," asked Jesus, "the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen?" "He will bring those evil men to an evil end," they answered, "and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen." So will the vineyard of Jesus—the Kingdom of God—pass from the Jews to the Gentiles. "The stone which the builders rejected," Jesus warned, changing the figure, "the same is become the head of the corner. Therefore," He concluded, "I say to you that the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof." Not one of all those present failed to understand the full meaning of these words, though not many of them became followers of the divine Teacher as the result.

Yet another parable, that of the king who made a marriage for his son, resembles in its main outlines that considered in a previous chapter.<sup>1</sup> Those invited to the marriage supper refused to accept and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his trade. Outcasts and mere strangers were called in to take their places, even as the Gentiles will take the places of

<sup>1</sup> Chap. XVIII.

the Jews who heed not the invitation of their King. The Saviour concluded the parable by telling of the man who had not on the wedding garment and was cast out into "exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Hence no mere acceptance of divine faith by the Gentiles will insure salvation. Faith must be productive of good works.

The members of the Sanhedrin left discomfited; but that same day other Pharisees came with a problem that contained delicate political elements. "Tell us," they said after an hypocritical, complimentary preface, "what dost Thou think: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" The dilemma herein presented has often been pointed out. An affirmative answer would displease the Jews, who hated Roman taxation; a negative one would bring the Saviour into conflict with the Romans. Jesus knew very well, of course, that treachery lay behind the request. "Why tempt you me? Show Me the coin of the tribute." They produced the Roman penny stamped for use in Palestine. "Whose image and inscription is this?" "Caesar's," they answered. Then said Jesus: "Render, therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." This is a general answer to all the ages as to civil and religious obligations, and contains the principle by which to regulate our conduct to Church and State.

A little later in the day the Sadducees brought their objections against the general resurrection by citing the preposterous example of seven brothers marrying successively one woman, all of them dying without children. "In the resurrection, therefore," they asked with grim irony, "when they shall rise again, whose wife shall she be of them, for the seven had her to wife?" "You err," said Christ in reply, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. The children of this world

marry and are given in marriage; but they that shall be accounted worthy of that world and of the resurrection of the dead shall neither be married nor take wives. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of the resurrection." Marriage is an institution of earth for the perpetuation of the human family. In heaven we live the life of the spirit and live no more the life of the flesh.

One of the Scribes, evidently deeply impressed with what Jesus had been saying, asked: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" It was a controverted point among the lawyers as to which law was the most important. Jesus answered in substance as He had answered on another occasion: "The first commandment of all is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength.' This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' There is no other commandment greater than these; on these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets." The Scribe's comment satisfied the Saviour as to his sincerity. "Well, Master, Thou hast said in truth, that there is one God, and there is no other besides Him." "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God," came the approving words of Jesus.

And now ends what may be called the triumphal period of Christ's final visit to Jerusalem. The days that remain will be days of stress and storm, in which hate will seem to triumph over love; iniquity over justice.

## STUDY TOPICS

1. When and what was the Paschal feast?
2. Who, today, in the Church is the servant of all?
3. Trace the route of the caravans on the map on page 28.
4. Read carefully the accounts of the curing of the blind men in Matthew, Luke, and Mark.
  - a) Wherein are they alike?
  - b) How do they differ?
  - c) Account for the divergences.
  - d) Do the differences weaken or strengthen the story?
5. What should we learn from the parable of the rich nobleman?
6. What word have we in our language that comes from the word Magdalen?
7. Who might be compared to the barren fig tree?
8. What was the Sanhedrin?
9. Give the full meaning of this prophecy, "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof."
10. Who were the Sadducees?
11. What did Jesus mean by the words, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God"?
12. Study the Scriptural text to which the following quotation refers; and make your own application.

Luke xix, 21—"Under a most impertinent tone and a most cruel insult the servant thought to shelter his discomfiture and laziness. This is the history of everyone who has received abundant graces and yet has chosen to obey his own passions; he seeks an excuse in the difficulties of duty, in the exactions of the lawgiver, in the danger of ill using heavenly gifts; but the truest reason is found in his cowardice and sloth."—Le Camus III: ii, 25.



## XXIV. THE WEDNESDAY BEFORE THE PASSION

*"What think you of Christ? Whose Son is He?" Pharisees Cannot Explain Words of Psalm cix; Jesus Rebukes Scribes and Pharisees before Those Assembled; Their Hypocrisy; Their Pretensions; Their Pride of Position; "Be you not called Rabbi"; Their Avarice; Zeal of Pharisees for Converts; Their Sophistries about Oaths; True Doctrine; Externalism; Making Clean the Outside of the Cup; Whited Sepulchers; The Destroyers of the Prophets; Apostrophe to the Holy City; The Widow's Mite; Deputation of Greeks; Voice from Heaven; Jesus Leaves for Bethany; Signs of the Consummation of the World; Five Wise and Five Foolish Virgins; Parable of the Talents; Sanhedrin Determines to Put Jesus to Death; Judas Agrees with Sanhedrin to Betray His Master. (Matt. xxii, xxiii; Mark xii; John xii; Mark xiii; Matt. xxv, xxvi.)*

Wednesday of the week in which Jesus was put to death finds Him again in the Temple. During this visit He turned abruptly to a group of Pharisees and asked: "What think you of Christ? Whose Son is He?" They answered, according to the general belief among the Jews, "David's." "How then," asked Our Lord, quoting from Psalm cix, "doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit on My right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool.' If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" The Pharisees were silent, because they did not admit the distinction between the divine and the human nature of Jesus. As Man, Christ, descended from David, is in a general sense David's son; while the psalmist very properly speaks of Jesus as his Lord when referring to Him as God. "And no man," says St. Matthew, "was able to answer Him a word. Neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions."

The Saviour, no longer checking His indignation, took occasion to lash these detestable sects in the presence of all those gathered around. "The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do. But according to their works do ye not. For they say and do not." We must distinguish between the official and his character. However unworthy the person representing authority, he must be obeyed by virtue of his position. If we give obedience only to worthy rulers all manner of confusion and disorder must follow. These Pharisees were indeed unworthy of their high trust, as Jesus points out. "For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but with a finger of their own they will not move them." The strict code of the Pharisees when legislating for others was notoriously in contrast with the laxity of their own way of life. "And all their works they do for to be seen of men. For they make their phylacteries broad and enlarge their fringes. And they love the first places at feasts and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market place, and to be called by men, Rabbi." The irony of these words was not lost on the hearers, not only in the sect of the Pharisees, but even among the less sophisticated Jews. The pretensions of these formalists were so well known that they were ridiculed in the everyday conversation of the common people. Hypocrisy is often ludicrous. Thus from a Scriptural passage,<sup>1</sup> the adherents of rigid ceremonial regulated that every child of Israel should carry on his arm or breast a record of God's precepts and benefactions. The Pharisees went further and had their bodies covered with long parchments on which were written their rules of conduct. To distinguish him from the

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus xiii, 16.

Gentile, the Jew was required to wear a fringe on his mantle, which was also to serve as a mute reminder to keep the law. To emphasize this race distinction and to exhibit their zeal for the commandments, the Pharisees extended their fringes to win attention from their less aristocratic countrymen. The picture of these zealots of form covered with amulets from head to foot, and enveloped in mantles with blue fringes of enormous length, was so fantastic that it called forth irony from the always tolerant, gentle Saviour.

Pride of position is the besetting sin of these zealots. To be the recipients of honor in the high positions they hold is more important than to render service. The counsel of Jesus about seeking the lowest place does not belong in their code. "And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market place, and to be called by men, Rabbi." The Apostles and all followers of Jesus are not to seek such empty honors and titles. "But be not you called Rabbi; for One is your Master; and you are all brethren."

Again addressing Himself to the two groups that all along have opposed Him in His divine work of regenerating and saving the world, He cried out in justifiable indignation: "But woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in; and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter." He upbraids them for their grasping avarice. "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers. For this you shall receive the greater judgment." Some of the Pharisees were accustomed to visit the homes of grief-stricken widows for the ostensible purpose of bringing them comfort, but in reality to

enjoy the hospitality of the house and the gifts of the bereaved. One can hardly conceive of meanness descending lower.

“Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you go round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves.” Their zeal in making converts is not condemned so much as the harmful doctrines which they afterwards preached to these converts, and especially the bad example which they so frequently gave them.

“Woe to you, blind guides, that say whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing; but he that shall swear by the gold of the Temple is a debtor.” By contrast Jesus sets down a plain, straightforward rule of conduct covering this subject. “Ye foolish and blind; for whether is greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctifieth the gold?” Again, the Pharisees taught this strange doctrine: “And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is upon it, is a debtor.” The Saviour answers all this unworthy quibbling in these simple, direct utterances: “Ye blind; for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? He therefore that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things that are upon it. And he that sweareth by heaven sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon.”

The littleness of the Pharisaical sect in taxing such unimportant things as mint, and neglecting really important matters of faith and mercy is dismissed with this striking metaphor: “Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.” Externalism, forms and observances of all kinds, are worthless if they do not proceed from a clean, upright heart. “Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you make clean

the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness. Thou blind Pharisee, first make clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside may become clean."

These great assertions are an everlasting condemnation of hypocrisy whenever and wherever found. Today, as in the time of the Pharisees—perhaps even more so than in their time—there is need of courageous, positive preaching on true inward purity and honesty as against seeming decency and a visible observance of the moral code. Too many are content with outward cleanliness, which wins them human esteem, but have no concern for that cleanliness which God takes into account—cleanliness of the heart.

A short distance from where Jesus and His hearers were standing was the brook of Cedron, near which arose the tombs that had been whitewashed a short time before. To Jesus this sight suggested yet another trope of condemnation. "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whited sepulchers, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness." If we may be permitted to extend somewhat the content of the figure, it applies also to all such as are concerned altogether about physical beauty and the adornment of the body, neglecting entirely the beauty and adornment of the soul. There is a modern paganism that worships the body; its votaries offer everything rich and beautiful which grows upon the face of the earth, or is hidden away in the depths of the sea, in sacrifice to the ease, comfort, and adornment of their chosen god.

Remembering the prophets in costly monuments and making their sepulchers glorious and protesting loyalty to their memories is yet another form of Pharisaical hypocrisy. "Woe to

you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; that build the sepulchers of the prophets, and adorn the monuments of the just, and say: 'If we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' " Their words of self-approval are in reality a self-condemnation. "Wherefore you are witnesses against yourselves, that you are the sons of them that killed the prophets."

Then in a sentence that recalls the forceful language of the Baptist, Jesus continues to condemn these upper-class sects in withering metaphors. "You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?" And what their fathers did they will do also, in spite of protestations of loyalty to the ancient prophets. "Therefore, behold, I send to you prophets and wise men and Scribes; and some of them you will put to death and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just, even unto the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the Temple and the altar."

The apostrophe to the Holy City has a tenderness of appeal which shows Jesus to be the lover of His race and His country, even when that race is ready to reject Him, and when that country feels no quickenings of national pride that the Son of God chose it for His birthplace and His home. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as a hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not? Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see Me henceforth till you say: 'Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.' " Then He shall return in the clouds of



heaven to judge the world; and the Jews, at last converted, shall proclaim Him the Son of God.

The Messiah left the Temple, not to enter it again. In His going there was an impressiveness that stimulates imagination and does not easily fade out of memory. His lament over the doomed city has all the elements of epic grandeur, and belongs in the noblest literature of the world.

As He was going out He waited for a few moments in the women's court until the Apostles joined Him. They noticed people putting their offerings into the alms-boxes with trumpet-like openings. The rich gave with pomp and circumstance; whereas, unnoticed in such a parade of giving, a poor widow cast in her small coins. Jesus, seeing the act, commended her. "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living." There is little doubt that her charity meant personal privation, but she gave joyously, and God loves the cheerful giver.

Before the Saviour reached the outside of the Temple a deputation of Greeks, come from Decapolis for the Pasch, said to the Apostle Philip: "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip told their request to Andrew, and together the two went to Jesus. After the strangers were introduced, the Redeemer said solemnly to them: "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." So the death of Jesus, the perfect Seed, will multiply spiritual life in millions of souls. The divine Teacher continued: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal. If any man minister to Me,

let him follow Me; and where I am, there also shall My minister be." There are in every age people who are extremely concerned about this temporal life and all that it implies. They are extremists in the matter of health, pleasures, human comforts of all kinds. As a result they forget all about the spiritual life and lose their souls.

Jesus referred with emotion to His approaching Passion, and to His power to save through the cross. "Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause I came unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." A divine manifestation followed these words. A voice—the voice of the Eternal Father—was heard coming out of heaven. "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." Those to whom the Saviour spoke held divided opinion as to the manifestation and its meaning, some attributing the sound to thunder, while others maintained that what they heard was the voice of an angel. Jesus Himself explained that the voice they had just heard was a voice which "came not because of Me but for your sakes." He continued to refer to His approaching death in these words: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." Those who listened failed to understand. "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever; and how sayest Thou: 'The Son of Man shall be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" The Saviour did not answer a question which had been answered many times already. "Yet a little while," He concluded, "the Light is among you. Walk whilst you have the Light, that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the Light, believe in the Light that you may be the children of the Light." Jesus, the Light, is soon to leave them,

and His revelation will be carried to the Gentiles, but it is possible for the Jews to accept His word while He is still with them. The Evangelist concludes the scene with the terse observation: "These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them."

He left for Bethany. The road He followed led across the Mount of Olives, and as He reached the crest of the ascent He turned around and faced the Holy City. The sun was already far down in the sky and a soft light fell upon the distant buildings. Never before, perhaps, had the Temple looked so beautiful to Jesus. Surrounded by His Apostles, He stood for some moments watching the towers and minarets. One of the Apostles broke the silence. "Master, behold what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" The Heart of the Saviour was filled with sadness as He answered: "Seest thou all these great buildings? Amen, I say to you, the days will come in which there shall not be left a stone upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down." The Apostles, their curiosity aroused by this prophecy, crowded around Him and asked: "Master, tell us when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the consummation of the world?" Our Saviour answered these questions in a long prophetic discourse telling of the final overthrow of Judaism and of the establishment of His Church. This discourse will be reviewed in the next chapter.

In the second part of this instruction, Jesus introduced the parable of the five wise and the five foolish virgins. The little story was taken out of the domestic and social life of the Jews. Marriages were generally celebrated at night, the bridegroom with his friends going to the home of the bride, where she and her friends awaited them; after receiving her from her father

in marriage, he took her to his own home, where neighboring girls, bearing oil lamps, stood ready at his door to receive them. The bridal party on this occasion was late in arriving, and the oil of the watchers was consumed during the long wait. The conduct of the five wise virgins, who had set some of the oil aside for such an emergency, is contrasted with that of the foolish five, who had made no such provision. All their oil was burned out, and not being able to borrow any from their more provident sisters, they hurried away to buy some. The bride and groom arrived meantime and entered their future home. When the absent virgins returned, the doors were locked, the wedding feast was under way, and they were not permitted to enter. So, in the final words of Jesus, will the unfaithful and improvident be rejected. "Amen, I say to you, I know you not." For the benefit of His hearers He adds this caution: "Watch ye therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour."

The parable of the talents—five, two, and one—follows immediately that of the five wise and the five foolish virgins. In structure and thought it resembles that other story of the pounds already considered.<sup>1</sup> It was based on the practices of money changers with which all Jews were familiar. Two of the servants increased the five and the two talents given to them, while he who received the one talent allowed the money to lie idle. The third servant's defense of his conduct only adds to his guilt. "Lord, I know that thou art a hard man; thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatherest where thou hast not strewed. And being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth; behold here thou hast that which is thine." The money belonged to the master to be used and increased;

<sup>1</sup> Chap. XXIII.

also the time and the service of the servant. Hence the lord replied to this timid and idle workman: "Wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed; thou oughtest therefore to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own with usury." Punishment follows. "Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye into exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

From these two parables Jesus proceeds at once to what they symbolize. So shall the faithful, who have used their talents wisely for God's glory here below be set apart from the improvident who have wasted God's gifts. Indeed, the rest of the discourse is a consideration of the scene and the events of the last judgment, in which there shall be a final accounting of the use we have made of our talents. The language is lofty and quite in keeping with its sublime content:

"And when the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His majesty." There shall be, for a brief space, an assembling of all the sons of men of every period of time and of every land. Then shall follow the great separation which shall be fixed and final. "And all the nations shall be gathered together before Him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left." Sentence, which shall be supremely comforting or supremely terrible, depending upon the state of the indi-

vidual, will follow: "Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" There shall be a summing up of their good works, for the performance of which the saved are to be made partakers in glory. They took care of Christ's poor and sick and abandoned, and in so doing ministered unto Christ Himself. Out of their humility, that so glorious a reward should be given for what they considered so meager a service, the just will ask: "Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and fed Thee; thirsty, and gave Thee drink? And when did we see Thee a stranger and took Thee in? Or naked and covered Thee?" The Judge of the world will answer: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." Every redeemed soul is of the family of Jesus. The very least is His brother.

The contrast for all lost souls at the final accounting will be appalling. "Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand: 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.'" They, too, were given opportunities to minister unto God's poor and abandoned, but, preoccupied with temporal concerns, with the concupiscence of the flesh and the pride of life, they spent their all upon themselves. In their confusion and despair they will not understand. "Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee?" The answer of the Judge to these lost souls will present the very opposite of that which was stated to the army of the saved. "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me." Then the great uniting will be transformed into



a final parting. The farewells must be said for the last time; and there will be left no hope all along the unbounded ages that one look of love will go forth to receive an answering look from across the great chasm. "And these shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting."

The disciples who listened to this momentous discourse were silent and sad. And no wonder, for Jesus, whom they loved, whom they had followed, to whom they had so often gone with their troubles and disputes, appears to them now as the terrible Arbiter from whose decision there is to be no appeal. Almost on the eve of the day when He Himself is to be the Accused and then the Condemned, He proclaims Himself, with a majesty of language never equaled, the final Judge of all the races of men.

When Jesus concluded the discourse, He continued with His little company to Bethany. He was sad at the thought of His nearing Passion and of the hard days ahead for His beloved Apostles. "You know," He said, "that after two days there shall be the Pasch, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified."

Meanwhile, the Sanhedrin—the ancients of the people—met in the house of the high priest, Caiphas. They were enraged at the stinging rebukes with which the Saviour chastised them earlier in the day; and without a dissenting voice they reaffirmed their judgment of two months before. Jesus of Nazareth must die.

Back from the Mount of Olives traveled a lone man. He moved stealthily, looking around from time to time. He was none other than Judas Iscariot, apostate Apostle, disappointed in his worldly dreams and ambitious hopes of the Saviour. The earthly kingdom to which he had looked forward was a

myth. Christ was to meet defeat in death, and that was to be the end. Dissatisfied and resentful, Judas was now determined to deliver up his Master for a price. Accordingly he sought the council chamber in the house of Caiphas, knocked and was admitted. He announced himself as a follower of the Nazarene, and abruptly made known the object of his visit. "What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?" They knew he was a traitor, now gone almost too far to recede, and did not appear enthusiastic over his announcement. After a brief consultation, they decided to offer him thirty pieces of silver—about nineteen dollars in our money—which he accepted. He promised to bring them into the presence of his Master at the most suitable time and place. Then he abruptly left the Sanhedrin.

Judas is a tragic figure. He is the most appalling example of lost opportunity. He chose the grip of the halter instead of the merciful embrace of his dear Master. All the tragic figures of literature are make-believe beside this man. In one moment he fell over the abyss, gone beyond hope. He might, had he chosen, have been lifted up and pardoned. He was doomed, not because he was a traitor, but because he lost hope that a traitor could be forgiven. He sinned in betraying Jesus. He was condemned for thinking that the Jesus whom he betrayed could not forgive him.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Give a summary of Christ's condemnation of the Pharisees and Scribes.
2. Explain the figure of making clean the outside of the cup; and that of the whited sepulcher.
3. What is meant by the sentence, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal"?

4. Ask four questions on the parables of the Virgins and of the Talents.

5. It is stated that the Sanhedrin condemned Jesus without a single dissenting vote. How would you explain the vote of Nicodemus?

6. Was Judas lost because he betrayed Jesus?

7. Look up the social customs peculiar to a Jewish wedding.

8. Summarize the scene of the Last Judgment in your own words.

9. You will find it interesting and useful to trace the growth of the mental sufferings of Jesus as He thought of His approaching immolation. In Luke xii: 49, 50, His mental suffering is first manifested. Notice how much more intense it is in John xii: 27, and how it reaches its height in the Garden of Gethsemani, where all the Evangelists mention it in their narratives. (Matt. xxvi, 38-44; Mark xiv, 34-41; Luke xxi, 41-44; John xviii, 11.)

## XXV. THE PROPHETIC DISCOURSE

*The Threefold Question; Apostles Wish the Triumph of Jesus; Calamities to Come upon the Holy City; False Prophets; False Christs; Racial and Political Disturbances; The Apostles Are to Continue Their Ministrations; Prophecies Fulfilled in Jewish Wars; Famines; Earthquakes; Jews Will Persecute Apostles as They Persecuted Christ; Paganism Will Oppose Them; In These Struggles Will Be Found Defections and Betrayals; The Apostles Will Be Inspired How to Answer Their Enemies; Christianity Will Continue to Grow; Destruction of Jerusalem; Hurry and Confusion Following; Massacre of the Jews; Many Exiled; Time of the Siege Shortened Because of the Elect; Reward of False Prophets; The Reign of Jesus over the World; Signs Preceding; Paganism and Judaism to Perish; Apostolic Messengers; Messengers of the Tidings in Every Age and Country; The Promise; Final Destruction of the World Known to God Alone; Watch and Be Prepared for the Event of Your Own Death. (Matt. xxiv; Mark xiii; Luke xxi.)*

While yet on the Mount of Olives the Apostles put to the Saviour three questions: "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the consummation of the world?" By way of reply Jesus delivered an extended prophetic discourse.

More than anything else, the Apostles hoped to witness the glory of Jesus. Their hopes of a human triumph by the Messiah and the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel had long ago been dispelled. Yet they still waited for the great restoration and renewal that would come with the establishment of the Christian religion. Jesus had just said, speaking of the buildings of the Temple, which the Apostles had pointed out to Him: "Do you see all these things? Amen, I say to

you, there shall not be left here a stone upon a stone that shall not be destroyed." Of the questions which the Apostles put to Jesus, the first which they desired to have answered related to the destruction of the Temple and the city.

In His reply the Master pictured the calamities that were to come upon the Holy City before it was finally destroyed. He prefaced the prophetic pronouncement with a warning to the Apostles themselves. "Take heed that no man seduce you, for many will come in My Name saying: 'I am Christ, and the time is at hand.' And they will seduce many." Such false prophets appeared even in the time of the Apostles, to proclaim themselves the power of God, as Simon Magus did, or to set themselves up to be other Christs, as was done by Dositheus. And, needless to say, it will be found unmistakably true that every age in the Church's history will see the coming and the passing of some one or other false prophet who for a period will set himself up as the Great Deliverer.

This religious upheaval will be accompanied by disturbances in the racial and political world. "And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that ye be not troubled; for these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." The Apostles are to continue their ministry in the face of all such disturbances, even as the Church of a later day must serve and save, no matter what happens in the world. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be pestilences and famines and earthquakes in divers places and terrors from heaven; and there shall be great signs. Now all these are the beginnings of sorrows."

The prophecy which Jesus pronounced was fulfilled in the struggles of the Jews against the Parthians, in the Jewish massacres in Babylon and Alexandria, in the struggles occur-

ring in the very heart of Palestine itself. "Every city," Josephus tells us, "seemed divided into two hostile camps."<sup>1</sup> Battles took place at Ptolemais, Tyre, Caesarea, and Gadara. Moreover, evidences were not wanting of disaster to the Children of Israel. Caius Caesar was making ready to chastise them for refusing to place his statue in the Temple; Vitellius, Governor of Syria, threatened to send his army through Palestine against Aretas, King of Arabia. The famine under Claudius which brought so many hardships to Greece and Rome was felt in Jerusalem also. Earthquakes were experienced during the reigns of the Emperors Claudius and Nero in several cities of Asia Minor.

Between these signs and the great destruction that is to follow, there shall be, however, an interval of pause. Judaism will make one final effort to destroy the religion of Jesus even as it strove to destroy Jesus Himself. It will treat the Apostles in much the same way as it treated the Master. "But before all these things," the Redeemer warned His faithful followers, "they will lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the councils and to the synagogues, and into prisons, dragging you before kings and governors for My Name's sake. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall put you to death, and you shall be hated by all nations for My Name's sake. And it shall happen unto you for a testimony." Scarcely shall these Apostles have begun their labors, after the Ascension of Jesus, when the fiercest kind of opposition will meet them at every turn. First, there will be the deep, insistent hate of Judaism, which cannot tolerate the thought of its own displacement. Even as the upper-class Jews showed the most implacable opposition to Jesus, so will they also to the disciples whom He left behind to continue His work.

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus II, 17, 10; 18, 1-8.



Secondly, beyond the limited world of Judaism is the vaster world of paganism. The Roman Empire will stretch forth her arm and St. Peter and St. Paul will give their full measure of blood. The first Christians—many of them instructed by the Apostles—will pay the full price in bone and flesh for the martyr's crown.

In those earlier combats there shall not be wanting evidences of weakness, defections and betrayals. "And then," says the divine Teacher, "shall many be scandalized and shall betray one another and shall hate one another; and many false prophets shall arise and shall seduce many. And because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold. And the brother shall betray his brother unto death, and the father his son; and children shall rise up against the parents and shall work their death."

It is not encouraging, this picture which Jesus presents to the men who are to be His immediate followers. Not only will they witness the sufferings, persecution, and martyrdom of others, but they themselves will be subjected to hatred and opposition. They will, however, be given wisdom and speech to confound their enemies. "And when they shall lead you and deliver you up, be not thoughtful beforehand what you shall speak; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay." Not alone in behalf of the Apostles was this promise carried out, but even in favor of the early Christians. Children and young girls were given wisdom which their judges, persecutors, and adversaries were "not able to resist and gainsay."

Out of this long, relentless struggle of the first days of Christianity will come the victorious spread of the Gospel. "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all the nations, and then shall

the consummation come." The abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel<sup>1</sup> is identified with the destruction of Jerusalem. "When you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, then know that the desolation thereof is at hand." From the Mount of Olives as the center of his operations, Titus surrounded the Holy City and brought to fulfillment the prophetic words of Jesus. The Roman standards, symbolic of Roman power, and the badges and bucklers signed with the images of pagan gods, which the Roman soldiers wore, were in truth the very "abomination of desolation" to the Jews of Jerusalem, who still cherished the age-long belief that they were God's chosen people. Indeed, the very presence of these pagans was a profanation of the Holy City.

The words of warning that follow are striking in their rhetorical suggestiveness. We infer the hurry and confusion from the advice given all who would escape the horrors of the catastrophe. "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; and he that is on the housetop, let him not come down to take anything out of his house; and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat." The siege in which the Jews were to hold out with the bravery of despair will come to an end with a defeat that will be crushing and terrible. The mercy so often shown to the vanquished will be absent then. The obstinacy of the defenders will madden the besiegers. Those captured within the city need look for no clemency. It were best for those in Jerusalem and in the country round about to escape, if escape be possible. "These are the days of vengeance," as the Saviour expresses it, "that all things may be fulfilled that are written." As so often happens in a fire or a flood, there is no time for delay. Leave belongings in the house to perish with the house, leave the coat

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel ix, 26, 27.

in the field and save the life. There is pity in the words of Jesus for nursing mothers, whose condition renders flight difficult. "But woe to them that are with child and give suck in those days. But," He adds, "pray that your flight be not in the winter or on the Sabbath." Nature, in the first instance, will bring hardships to such as would escape, and Pharisaical adherence to law will not permit escape in the second case. "For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. For there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people; and they shall fall by the edge of the sword; and shall be led away captives into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles; till the times of the nations be fulfilled."

How inexorably the doom foreshadowed in the prophecy came upon the ill-fated city! It is conjectured by careful historians that, with the fall of Jerusalem, a million Jews were massacred and nearly a hundred thousand exiled into Egypt and elsewhere. The Temple, the fulfillment of Solomon's dream, the pride of Israel, the glory of every Jew at home or settled amid strange peoples—it, too, fell, trampled upon by the victors, the standards of strange gods set about its ruins.

Though a long siege preceded the capture of the Holy City, yet according to Josephus and Tacitus,<sup>1</sup> the surrender came sooner than the Romans expected. This circumstance saved the lives of many who must otherwise have perished. Exegetes identify these as the "elect" mentioned by Jesus in His prophetic message. "And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened."

Out of the general confusion and horror, false prophets will

<sup>1</sup> Josephus V, 12, 1. Tacitus: *Hist.* V, 2.

arise to lead still further astray the terrified people. Jesus sounds the note of warning for the benefit of His disciples and all true believers. "Then if any man shall say to you: 'Lo, here is Christ,' or there, do not believe him; for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, in so much as to deceive (if possible) even the elect." No matter with what eloquence the appeal comes, the true followers of Jesus must not be led away from the newly found path of the true faith. "If therefore they shall say to you: 'Behold, He is in the desert,' go ye not out; 'Behold He is in the closets,' believe it not."

Signs of the coming of the power of Jesus after His Resurrection will be swift and sure. "As lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Rejected by God's chosen people, the Messiah, risen and triumphant, shall pass out from the East to the Gentile world of the West, and millions will accept Him as the only Son of God, the Redeemer and the Restorer.

The inauguration of the reign of Jesus over the whole world, following "the tribulation of those days," will be sublime and terrifying. "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven. And upon the earth distress of nations by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves; men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory."

Commentators have given a figurative meaning to this coming of Jesus. To the Jews the heavens shall be obscured and the light of faith hidden. In distress and confusion they will wander throughout the world, witnessing the triumph of Him whom they rejected. Paganism and Judaism must wither away in favor of the everlasting truth that has come to the human race. The powers of heaven shall be moved to establish an everlasting covenant with God; and the "Sign of the Son of Man," the Cross, shall appear in heaven symbolic of victory and power to the followers of Jesus, and of defeat to His enemies.

"And He shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them." The Apostles themselves are to be the first messengers who will trumpet His truth to the world, even as the angels proclaimed Him to the shepherds of Judea. And every age and every nation will send its messengers to advance the knowledge of the doctrines of Jesus, until at last the Church militant merges into the Church triumphant. Unhappy the age or the nation that is poor in messengers to herald the everlasting tidings!

The early Christians will pass through years of bitter persecutions. But out of these persecutions the Church of Jesus will emerge triumphant. "When you shall see these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand." The promise of spring lies hid in winter, and summer waits to blossom out of spring. "See the fig tree; when the branch thereof is now tender and the leaves are come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the Kingdom of God is at hand." This great restoration is not

set in some far-off, uncertain future. Already the sap is stirring in the tree, and all along the branches are visible the sprouts of promise. "Amen, I say to you that this generation shall not pass away until all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass."

As to the final hour when God's work on earth shall be done, only God Himself knows that. Not to the angels nor to Jesus Himself, considered simply as Man, is that knowledge granted. "But of that day or hour no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."

The world shall endure until, in the eternal mind, it has fulfilled the eternal purpose. For the Apostles, the disciples, indeed for all who profess faith in Jesus, their own death is very much nearer and more important than the end of the world. Our own end, rather than the general consummation, must chiefly concern us. "Watch ye, therefore, because you know not at what hour your Lord will come." Of such great moment is death that the Saviour iterates its importance under many figures. "Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit upon the face of the whole earth." Again: "Take ye heed, watch and pray, for you know not when the time is. Even as a man who, going into a far country, left his house, and gave authority to his servants over every work, and commanded the porter to watch. For you know not when the Lord of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning."

In the figure, life is compared to night with its darkness and uncertainties before the day of eternity. We may be called out of night when it is yet early, or when it is far spent, or



close to the dawn. It is not so important when; but it is of supreme importance that we be ready when the call comes. Hence, the frequent warning of Jesus: "What I say to you, I say to all, Watch!"

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Why did the Apostles desire to know the time of the end of the world?
2. Name some of the early Christian martyrs who confounded their accusers and judges by the courage and wisdom of their answers.
3. Where before has Christ spoken of false prophets?
4. Who are the messengers of Christ today?
5. How many meanings has the word "world"?
6. What should be the result of our meditating on, "Take ye heed, watch and pray."?
7. What are some of the differences between Judaism and paganism?
8. Review the account of the siege in which Jerusalem was destroyed.
9. Why does God in His wisdom conceal from us the time of the end of the world?
10. What is meant by the phrase, "Prepare for a happy death."?

## XXVI. THE LAST SUPPER

*Apostles Prepare Paschal Feast; How the Apostles Sat at Table; Jewish Paschal Feast; Dispute over Precedence; Washing of the Feet; Judas' Treachery Exposed; Judas Leaves the Table; Prophecy of Peter's Denial; Institution of the Holy Eucharist; Church's Teaching; "Let not your heart be troubled"; Preparing a Place for the Apostles; Meaning of Heaven; Promise of the Holy Ghost; Words of Comfort and Hope; "I will not leave you orphans"; Jesus Comforts the Apostles; They Arise from the Table. (Matt. xxvi; Luke xxii; John xiii, xiv.)*

On Thursday morning Jesus did not return to Jerusalem. He remained at Bethany in order, perhaps, to fit Himself for the great ordeal. About mid-afternoon the Apostles, approaching their Master, asked: "Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Pasch?" Not wishing that Judas should know either the house or the name of the person He had in mind, the Saviour said in an undertone to Peter and John: "Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water; follow him, and whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house, 'The Master saith, "My time is near at hand; where is My refectory that I may eat the Pasch with My disciples?"' And he will show you a large dining room, furnished; and there prepare ye for us." Whether the Jews sometimes anticipated the traditional Paschal feast, or whether the Saviour made the change on His own authority, we have no means of knowing. It is certain, however, that the anticipated supper which took place on this occasion was the feast commemorative of the Passover.

The two Apostles carried out the detailed orders of their Master, and the beautiful dining room was in readiness when

the company arrived that same evening about seven o'clock. It is quite possible that the owner of the room was a personal friend of the Saviour. Just after appointing the Apostles to their places, Jesus said by way of greeting: "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer." They occupied couches around the table in somewhat the following order: At the head, Jesus, with John at His right hand, and next to John, Andrew. On the right side of the table were Peter, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew. On the left side were Judas, Simon Zelotes, Jude (Thaddeus), James son of Alpheus, and James the Greater. The lower end was left vacant for the serving. No doubt they all reclined according to custom, resting on the left arm with the right hand free.

Although this feast was to be the beginning of the new Pasch, it is not at all improbable that the order of the traditional Paschal Supper was followed. It is of interest, perhaps, to note that order as observed by the Jews. The family group called together for the commemoration was seldom less than ten, and not more than twenty. Following rigorous regulations as to rank, each person took the place assigned him. Wine was brought on, recalling the deliverance out of Egypt, and according to Jewish custom the head of the family pronounced the benediction in the following words: "This day recalls our deliverance. It commemorates our departure out of Egypt. Blessed be the Lord, the Eternal, who created the fruit of the vine." Then the cup of wine was poured out and drunk, following which a basin of water was set before every member for the traditional washing of the feet; and bitter herbs, brought in shortly afterwards, recalled the rigors of the Egyptian bondage. The unleavened bread, made of wheat, barley, oatens, or rye flour, mixed with water, was set upon the table. The chief dish of the feast was the Paschal Lamb,

which had been previously immolated in the Temple. In accordance with a rigid ritual the Jews served the Paschal Lamb whole, neither feet, head, nor intestines having been previously removed. The meat was roasted beforehand over a spit, and during the process the entrails were kept fastened to the sides of the body.

Wine was again served, and on the request of one of the children the meaning of the feast was explained by the head of the family.<sup>1</sup> The sufferings borne by God's chosen people during their wanderings and sojourn in Egypt, and Jehovah's great mercies, as shown in their deliverance from bondage and their return home, were narrated to an attentive, reverent audience. Then at the end of the recital the assembly chanted the psalm beginning, "Praise the Lord, ye children; praise ye the name of the Lord."<sup>2</sup> It was here that the Paschal Lamb was carved and eaten. A third cup of wine was passed around, and shortly after, a fourth. Psalms<sup>3</sup> were recited, wine was served for the fifth time, and the feast concluded by the chanting of two canticles taken from Psalms cxxxiv, cxxxv.

We know that not all the details of the traditional Paschal Feast were observed at the Last Supper. In the Gospel record, the Mosaic tradition served merely as a sort of background for the Eucharistic banquet which was to become the new Pasch.

Because of a childish dispute among the Apostles, when the wine cup was first passed around, as to the order in which they should be served, Jesus took occasion by precept and then by example to teach them a much needed lesson in humility. "The kings of the Gentiles," He said, "lord it over them; and they that have power over them are called beneficent. But not so you; but he that is the greater among you, let him be-

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xii, 26, ff.    <sup>2</sup> Ps. cxii.    <sup>3</sup> Ps. cxiv, cxv, cxvi, cxvii.

come as the younger, and he that is the leader, as he that serveth. For which is greater, he that sitteth at table or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? But I am in the midst of you, as he that serveth."

Jesus gave force to His words by a striking example. He removed His outer garment, arranged a towel about His loins, took a basin of water, and began to wash the feet of these Apostles. When He came to Peter there was a noisy protest. "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" "What I do," answered his divine Master, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." "Thou shalt never wash my feet," protested Peter stoutly. "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me." "Lord," cried this Apostle of varying moods, "not only my feet, but also my hands and head." No; the mere act of washing the feet was enough. "He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly." The ceremony recalled the unclean traitor. "And you are clean, but not all." Jesus made no further reference to the erring Judas just then. He wished to shelter him while mercy was still waiting outside the door of his heart.

The Saviour resumed His outer garment and sat down again to supper. As the Apostles began to eat He emphasized the lesson He had just given. "Know you what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord; and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." There is one exception, however, among those present to whom the Saviour is not Master and Lord. For all the cunning and hypocrisy of Judas, Jesus has seen all along the real traitor behind the mask, even as He sees him now. "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen."

Those who affect to be scandalized at defections in high places in God's Church should keep in mind the unfortunate Judas, who fell from grace irrevocably, even within the charmed circle of Jesus Himself. The present occasion gives point to the prophecy which Jesus quotes from verse ten of the Fortieth Psalm. "But that the scripture may be fulfilled, 'He that eateth bread with me shall lift up his heel against Me.'" Judas is a willing victim. He knows how terrible is the treachery of the act he is about to consummate. And yet Jesus would have the Apostles know, would have Judas himself know, that because of the mercy of divine love, a warning is given while there is still time to retrace the erring steps. "At present, I tell you, before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe that I am He." By contrast the Saviour speaks of the happy lot of His friends: "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." In heaven also their places are secure: "That you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and may sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Jesus cannot forget the presence of the treacherous Apostle who so brazenly reclines near Him. "Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you shall betray Me." This positive statement caused anxiety in the minds of the eleven; they began to look into themselves; they began without any special order to put this question to their Master, "Is it I, Lord?" "One of the twelve who dippeth with Me his hand in the dish," Jesus answered. This was not, as might seem from the reading, a specific pointing out of the traitor. The phrase, "dippeth with Me," is general and may be considered equivalent to the saying, "breaketh bread with Me." The Apostle St. John, always the favored Apostle of more intimate trusts, asked his Master, on the suggestion of St. Peter, the name of the guilty



one. The Saviour replied to His beloved disciple, but below the hearing of the others: "He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped." Then He gave Judas a portion of the unleavened bread mixed with herbs, cautioning John to keep the information in confidence. The act of Jesus in presenting the morsel to Judas was in accord with that very general Jewish custom at feasts by which the head of the family was wont to present portions of bread or meat to guests from time to time in order to show his affection for them. No doubt the little act of courtesy extended on the present occasion was yet another invitation to the traitor to return into the arms of divine mercy. Judas accepted the morsel<sup>1</sup> without any sign of relenting. "That which thou dost, do quickly," the Saviour half whispered, seeing that the miserable Apostle was still impenitent. The Apostles, with the exception of St. John, interpreted the words of the divine Master as a request to Judas, who was the treasurer of the little company, to give alms to some poor person or to buy food for the next day.

Then Jesus said in solemn, emphatic tones: "The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed; it were better for him if that man had not been born." Judas, unable any longer to endure his surroundings, arose and said in a feeble challenge, "Is it I, Rabbi?" "Thou hast said it," answered his Master. And almost before the others were aware, the traitor was gone. With unstudied, dramatic fitness the Evangelist St. John closes the scene with the simple words: "And it was night."

The betrayer gone, very naturally there was less tension among the Apostles. Jesus, less reserved also, expressed many

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<sup>1</sup> The opinion of Origen and some others that the morsel here given to Judas was consecrated bread is refuted by St. Augustine. At the present time authorities are divided as to whether Judas left before or after the Institution of the Holy Eucharist.

tender words of farewell. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek Me, and as I said to the Jews, 'Whither I go you cannot come' . . . A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you. . . . By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." Here Simon Peter, not intent so much on the precept of love just enunciated as on the departure of his Master, asked abruptly: "Lord, whither goest Thou?" "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow hereafter." Peter was insistent. "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thee." This last bold promise received a chilling prophecy from the Master. "Wilt thou lay down thy life for Me? Amen, amen, I say to thee, the cock shall not crow till thou deny Me thrice." "Yea," answered the Apostle stoutly; "though I should die with Thee I will not deny Thee." The other Apostles were equally strong in their professions of loyalty. The thought of His chief Apostle is always in the mind of the Master, and there is a tenderness and a solicitude in this warning and promise: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren."

Jesus becomes retrospective. He contrasts the happy days which the Apostles spent in their earlier evangelical journeys with the unlovely future that awaits them. "When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, did you want anything?" No; they received a hospitable welcome everywhere. "But now," the Master warns them sadly, "he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip; and he that hath not, let him sell his coat and buy a sword. For I say to you that this that is written must yet be fulfilled in Me: 'And with the

wicked was He reckoned.’<sup>1</sup> For the things concerning Me have an end.” The reply of the Apostles that there were two swords at His disposal shows how imperfectly they understood the words of Jesus. “It is enough,” He answered as if He were speaking to children, to whom further explanation would be useless.

They had come to the close of the Paschal Supper. Some of the Apostles continued to eat what was left of the Paschal Lamb, while others sat watching their Master, who had been silent for some time. Suddenly His eyes became luminous, His body shone almost as It had at Thabor. He took a portion of the unleavened bread from the table, blessed it, and broke it before the eyes of all. Then He said: “Take ye and eat. This is my Body.” Lifting the cup of wine He said: “Take and drink ye all of This, for This is My Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.”

The Catholic Church has always taught that when these words of Jesus were pronounced over the bread and over the wine, the substance of each was changed into the substance of the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Himself. The Apostles so received this great miracle of the Unseen and so preached it to all their followers. For them the Act of Consecration was a literal reality, the change of one substance into another without any visible manifestation. So the act must be accepted by all within the communion of the true Church of Jesus, whose priesthood perpetuates the miracle to the end of time.

The Apostles received Holy Communion first under the appearance of bread, then under the appearance of wine. Following the act of consecration, Jesus conferred upon them the

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah liii, 12.

power of consecrating: "Do this for a commemoration of Me." Thus He bestowed on them the chief power of the priesthood.

The words that follow the great acts of Consecration and Ordination are tender and consoling. "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would not have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to Myself, that where I am you also may be."

There has been some speculation as to what meaning Jesus here attaches to the word "place." The sentence "I go to prepare a place for you" has led some writers to conclude that Jesus made a gesture with His hand toward the stars, indicating that the heaven He had in mind was situated somewhere upon one or other of the planets. Heaven, however, is essentially a state of happiness consequent upon the possession of God. That happiness once achieved can never be lost, for once the vision of God is gained by our striving, through the merits of the Redeemer, it never grows dim nor vanishes. Part of the joy of heaven is its stability and security. It is of small moment where heaven is, so long as we see God and can never lose the glory of His presence. "And," continued Jesus, "whither I go you know, and the way you know." Many times already had the Apostles been shown the way; they had been told that only through faith in Jesus and the observance of His commandments was it possible to achieve heaven and its happiness. The Apostle Thomas, losing sight of the spiritual meaning of the words, said to his divine Master, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Then is given the wonderful answer that so tersely, yet so adequately, describes the Son of God in His relationship to all

the children of men. "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me."

The Apostles did not yet appreciate the Nature and the Person of Jesus, else they would have known His relationship to the Eternal Father. "If you had known Me, you would without doubt have known My Father also." "Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us," Philip interrupted. Visible signs of the divine nature of Jesus were given often enough to make any further manifestations of Divinity unnecessary. It is no wonder that Jesus answered with seeming surprise: "Have I been so long a time with you, and have ye not known Me? Philip, he that seeth Me seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" This is so important a truth of faith that Jesus states it again. "Believe you not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? Otherwise, believe for the very works' sake." The Saviour had on other occasions affirmed His identity with God, but never so unmistakably as in this reply.

Faith alone is not enough for these Apostles or for any follower of Jesus. "If you love Me, keep My commandments." The Holy Spirit, who will enlighten a wavering faith and give power to imperfect works, is promised to complete the divine plan. "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him." Jesus iterated this later. "These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."

The Saviour Himself will see them again after the Resurrec-

tion. "I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more: but you see Me; because I live, and you shall live."

Again emphasis is placed upon service; the true lover is he who serves. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." To love Jesus is to love God; who loves the Son of God will receive the love of the Father in return, just as—to use an imperfect comparison—he who loves the child will receive the gratitude and affection of the parent. "And he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." Obviously to keep the law of Jesus is equivalent to loving Him; failure to observe His word is rebellion. "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My words."

Jesus consoles His Apostles in this time of sorrow, when He must leave them, with the promise of peace. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." They must not be troubled because He is going, as He told them at the beginning of His discourse. "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you, I go away and I come unto you. If you loved Me you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I." Jesus here is speaking of Himself as Man, of course, and not as God.

"And now," Jesus concluded before rising from the table, "I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe. I will not now speak many things with you; for the prince of this world cometh; and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence."



## STUDY TOPICS

1. Draw a diagram of the dinner table, showing the position of the Saviour and the Apostles.
2. Show that Peter's protest against Our Lord's washing his feet is in keeping with his character.
3. Was Judas a priest?
4. Did Judas receive his First Communion?
5. What was the greatest moment of the Last Supper?
6. Why do we not receive Communion under the appearances of wine?
7. What is the "Way" that Our Lord speaks of?
8. Is it possible to love Jesus and not obey His commandments?
9. What was the command Jesus had received from His father?
10. Give ten names from church history to illustrate the paragraph following:

"When ambition, doubt, offended pride, exercise one's brain, and when they have nothing but a heart full of selfishness to counterbalance them, anything is possible. Besides, it has always been observed in the Master's career that He fatally repels those whom His Person fails to attract. Concerning Him no one can be indifferent. Judas, beginning perhaps with mere doubt, reached at once the extreme of unbelief and of malice." Le Camus, III: 167, on Luke xxii, 3.

## XXVII. DISCOURSE FOLLOWING THE LAST SUPPER

*The Saviour and His Apostles Arise from Table; Discourse Following; Jesus the Vine, Eternal Father the Husbandman; The Un-productive Branch; Branch Must Be United to the Vine; Eternal Father Glorified in the Good Works of the Apostles; Love Is the Great Bond of Union; Love Shown by Works; Service Requires Sacrifice; Keep the Commandments and Abide in the Love of Jesus; Apostles Are the Friends of the Master; "You have not chosen Me, I have chosen You"; Servant Not Greater Than the Master; As the Master Was Persecuted so Will the Apostles Be Persecuted; Reflections on the Enemies of the Saviour; Warnings about Future Trials; Expedient that Jesus Leave His Apostles; The Holy Spirit Will Come; Words of Comfort; Ask the Father in the Name of the Divine Son; Apostles Understand the Words of Jesus; Hints about Their Flight; Prayer of Jesus for His Apostles; Jesus Prays First That the Eternal Father May Sustain Him; Prays for Union among the Apostles; Father Petitioned to Glorify the Son; Prayer for Perseverance; Jesus Himself Has Held the Apostles in Unity; Has Taken Them Out of a Lowly State and Made Them His Representatives; Prays Again for Unity; May They Persevere; End of the Prayer; Exalted Position of the Apostles; They Are First in the Thoughts of Jesus. (John xv, xvi, xvii.)*

At a sign from the Saviour the Apostles arose and stood around Him. While He yet lingered before passing out into the night, Jesus continued to speak to them with renewed affection: "I am the true vine; and My Father is the Husbandman." Union with Jesus must not be merely nominal. It must be so real as to be productive. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He will take away; and every one that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit." To be separated from Jesus means to be unfruitful in merits. The branch cannot bear fruit without the parent vine.

"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me." Through this figure of the vine and the branches Jesus emphasizes the truth that if we are to live wholesome spiritual lives we must be united with Him as the growing, productive vine is united to the parent trunk.

The faithful ministrations of the servant add to the happiness of the master; the dutifulness of the child brings joy to the parent. So the Eternal Father receives glory from the good works of the Apostles. "In this is My Father glorified; that you may bring forth very much fruit, and become My disciples." Love is the great bond of union between this blessed Master and His followers. The saving power of this virtue is repeated again and again with divine insistency. "As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you. Abide in My love."

Love, however, is shown more by deeds than by words. Even in our human relationships this is true. He who ministers to us when we are in need gives a truer expression of love than he who expresses his devotion in words. Service is sacrifice; words are a breath, an utterance. Jesus gives divine approval to this universal experience when He says to His Apostles: "If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love; as I also have kept My Father's commandments and do abide in His love." Love of one another must be the reflected love of Jesus. "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." Sacrifice is the testing of love, and no love has borne a sterner test than has the love of Jesus for His Apostles and for the entire race of man. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

On other occasions Jesus had spoken to His Apostles as

their Master. Not so now. "You are My friends if you do the things that I command you. I will not now call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends; because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you." And lest they should presume on this intimate position of friendship, the Saviour again reminds them that they must bring forth the fruit of good works. "You have not chosen Me; but I have chosen you; and have appointed you that you should go and should bring forth fruit; and your fruit should remain."

These Apostles are not of the rich, influential, unsympathetic world, even as their Master is not. To them will be meted out the same treatment which is soon to be meted out to Jesus Himself. "Remember My word that I said to you: 'The servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me they will also persecute you."

For a few moments Jesus turns His thought to His enemies. Their sin is a sin against the light. He had preached to them, but they would not hear. He had exhorted them, but they remained unmoved; mighty miracles they had witnessed, but they remained obdurate in their wickedness, blind in their pride of tradition and position. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. . . . If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father."

That they may not be unprepared when the hour of trial comes, Jesus warns the Apostles of the sufferings that are to be their portion at a later time. "These things I have spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you

out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God." Ignorant of the Eternal Father and of the Eternal Son made Man, these misguided zealots will put to death the first announcers of the Gospel of Redemption.

No doubt the grief which these simple followers of Jesus felt in their hearts was seen on their faces when these sad prophecies were announced to them. "But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your hearts. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." Jesus then tells His Apostles that the Spirit of God, when He is come "will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment." Much which the divine Master has to say cannot be said on this occasion, because the souls of the Apostles are not yet prepared to receive the message. Illumination of soul is to come with the Holy Ghost. "But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth."

A brief separation will take place after the Death of the Saviour, to be followed by a brief reuniting after the Resurrection. And then Jesus will ascend into glory. The Apostles do not understand. "What is this that He saith to us: 'A little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again, a little while and ye shall see Me,' and 'because I go to the Father'?" The words of Jesus, by way of reply to the confused Apostles, are buoyant and hopeful. "Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: 'A little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again a little while and ye shall see Me.' Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is

in labor, hath sorrow because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you."

As His friends and representatives, the Apostles may expect to have Jesus as their Mediator before the Eternal Father. "Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name He will give it to you. . . . Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." Because of their love for the Son, because of their belief in His Divine nature, they are loved by the Father. "For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." His eternal Sonship, the fact of His Incarnation, and His return to the Eternal Father, from whom He came, are set forth in direct affirmation: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father," after the work of redeeming the world is completed. The Apostles understand His words in this instance and express a joyful acceptance. "Behold, now Thou speakest plainly and speakest no proverb. Now we know that Thou knowest all things, and Thou needest not that any man should ask Thee. By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God." Jesus cannot forget, even after hearing these loyal, inspiring words, that in a little while the Apostles will flee in confusion before the ancients and the Roman soldiers inside the gate of the Olive Garden. "Do you now believe?" asked the Master wistfully. Then He added sadly: "Behold, the hour cometh, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone." Beyond the fulfillment of this dread prophecy of irresolution and cowardice, there is still hope. There is always hope with Jesus while life



is left to call for mercy. "These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world."

The prayer of Jesus for His Apostles comes as a touching conclusion to this great last discourse. With eyes uplifted, He addresses His Father in behalf of the men who are to continue His work after He has completed His mission of expiation. Fittingly the prayer begins as an appeal addressed by the Eternal Son to the Eternal Father. "Father, the hour is come. Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh that He may give Eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him." In the supreme struggle which is soon to begin with the arrest at the gate of the garden, Jesus asks the First Divine Person to sustain Him in His human nature, in order that by bearing up under all His sufferings He may glorify the Father yet more in the triumph of His Resurrection. Because of the divine power given Him over all flesh, Jesus prays the Father that life eternal may come to all confided to His keeping. "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him." Eternal life is the knowledge and possession of God through knowledge and love of the Redeemer. "Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." The Son of God made Man has glorified the Father, and with His Death the work of Redemption will be completed. Then the Father is petitioned to glorify the Son. "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory I had, before the world was, with Thee."

The rest of the prayer is for the unity, sanctification, and final perseverance of the Apostles. "I pray for them; I pray

not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me; because they are Thine." Unity is essential to the successful advancement of the Kingdom of God, hence the Father is petitioned to keep unity among the Apostles. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one, as We also are." Jesus has called these fishermen to be the first announcers of the great tidings. Though of different temperaments and of varying shades of opinion, the Master has held them together in harmonious life. Of them all, there is only one lost to the great cause. Jesus mentions him now with regret, as He had occasion to mention him heretofore. "Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept; and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture may be fulfilled." The Master has instructed these simple fishermen and peasants in God's divine word. As representatives of the Son of God, the world hates them because their spirit is so different from that of the world. The Eternal Father is besought not to take them out of the world, which they have yet to evangelize, but to keep them from evil while they still labor in the ministry. "I pray not that Thou should take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil." They are to remain like brave soldiers in the field of battle, where victory will come to them at last, following affliction and trouble.

Then, after praying for all those who through the Apostles will become followers, Jesus offers yet again a petition for unity. "And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me. That they may all be one as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." And even as the work of completing the conversion of the world will pass from Jesus to the Apostle, so will the glory of the work descend from the Father through

the Son to the Apostles also. "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to Them; that they may be one as We also are one." That they may have union with the Father through union with the Son, and through this union with the Son that they may be in union with one another—this is the last will and testament of the Master in favor of His first followers. "I in them, and Thou in Me; that they may be made perfect in one; and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast also loved Me."

The words that follow express the affection of Jesus for His Apostles, and go out as a petition in their favor to the Eternal Father. Happy indeed the hearts of those simple Galileans to hear from the lips of Jesus Himself this request in their behalf! Is it not almost an assurance of salvation? "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world." Then, almost as one pleading their cause, this gentlest of Masters thus addresses the First Divine Person: "Just Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee. And these have known that Thou hast sent Me."

Jesus has already made known the name of the Father to His Apostles during the three years He has been with them, and will remind them yet again of that great Name after He is risen from the dead. "And I have made known Thy Name to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Except for the five opening verses, the entire prayer following the Last Supper is offered up for the Apostles. We may judge how close they were to the Heart of Jesus when we note how He remembers them so long and so specially in His great

communion with the Eternal Father at a time when He was ready to step out of His rôle of Master and Teacher to become the Accused and Condemned and, a little later, in the impetuous rush of events, the Crucified. It is a notable expression of His affection, that the Apostles should then so exclusively occupy His thoughts. In twenty-four short hours it will be over—the arrest, the humiliation, the great suffering, and the agony of dying. Yet on the eve of it all, and a few hours before He is made a prisoner, and before these Apostles flee and leave Him in the darkness with His enemies, He has solicitude and great tenderness for them. He has called them out of obscurity to positions of great trust in His everlasting Kingdom. They will desert Him that night; but a loyalty of long after-years, when God's spirit has come upon them, will make up for that hour of weakness at the gate of Gethsemani.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. What is symbolized by the *branch* and by the *vine*?
2. "You have not chosen Me; I have chosen you." Tell where and how Jesus selected the Apostles. Are the circumstances of the selection of all the Apostles given in the Gospels?
3. Review the Prayer of Jesus under topical headings.
4. Jesus called His Apostles from a lowly state. Give the names of a few great leaders of the Church who were called to leadership from a lowly state. Review their beginnings.
5. Why is unity so necessary in the Church? Have there been periods of disunion in the Church? Name them. What bad effects followed?
6. Who is our Mediator before the Eternal Father? Why?
7. Jesus laid down His life for us. Are there circumstances today where men lay down their lives for others? Do you recall the names of any great missionary priests who laid down their lives for others?
8. Recall another occasion when Jesus prayed for unity among the Apostles.
9. Summarize the prayer of Jesus.
10. What virtue is emphasized in this discourse to the Apostles? Quote sentences to show this.

## XXVIII. JESUS' ARREST AND TRIALS

*Gethesemani; Prostration and Prayer; Sleeping Apostles; Betrayal; Arrest; Palace of Caiphas; Trial before Annas; Before Caiphas; Accusations; Jesus Declares He Is the Son of God; Denial of Peter; Repentance; First Trial before Pilate; Insolence of the Ancients; Jesus before Herod; Sent Back as a Fool to Pilate; Second Trial before Pilate; Weakness of Pilate; Expedients of Pilate; Scourging; Crowning with Thorns; Pilate Surrenders Jesus to the Jews; "Take you Him and crucify Him." (Matt. xxvi, xxvii; Mark xiv, xv; Luke xxii, xxiii; John xviii, xix.)*

It was about ten o'clock in the evening when Jesus and His Apostles walked through the deserted streets of Jerusalem into the Valley of the Cedron. After crossing the brook of Cedron, the little company halted before the Garden of Gethsemani, or the Oil-Press, a portion of which was set apart as a summer resort.

When they had passed through the gate, Jesus left His Apostles with the injunction: "Sit you here till I go yonder and pray." Then taking with Him Peter, James, and John, the three witnesses of His Transfiguration, He went into the grove that stood near the middle of the garden. Here He paused and said to His three companions: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death. Stay you here and watch with Me. Pray lest you enter into temptation." Then in the silence of the night He prostrated Himself on the ground, and passed through that mental experience which has come to be known by the suggestive phrase, "Agony in the Garden." No one, of course, can fully describe the sufferings of soul which Jesus went through in that loneliness among the olive trees. Ascetic writers and eloquent preachers have assembled the most im-

pressive words, those richest in imaginative meaning; yet too often we are conscious of labored speech, and the effort falls far below the naturalness of reality. Perhaps the experience of a great personal grief that weighs so heavily upon us as to change the whole face of the world will give us a truer understanding of the grief of Jesus in the garden than pages of eloquent description wrought out with the most delicate artistry. There is a kinship in pain. Those who themselves have suffered feel for others who suffer. That which is called success and what goes with it—triumph and praise—make people cold and patronizing and intolerant. One has only to study character in the humble beginner and character transformed through a succession of triumphs. One will not fail to observe essential differences. Triumphant people will not understand Gethsemani at all. An understanding of great mental pain comes most surely to those who have felt pain. Success, triumph, seeks the external. It lives on praise, on an unending series of honorable mentions. Those who would know the grief of Jesus, as well as it can be known by creatures, must have felt grief, or must so love the Saviour as to feel grief in His grief.

While Jesus prayed the divine in Him seemed to be suspended. Indeed, He could truly say to His three chosen Apostles before He left them: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." We can estimate somewhat the anguish, the sense of dread and abandonment which these words convey, though of course we cannot appreciate them fully. "My Father," He prayed, "if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. But not what I will, but what Thou wilt." In order to seek respite and, perhaps, consolation He went back to the three Apostles and found them asleep. Addressing Himself to Peter, who but a short time before was so earnest



in his protestations of loyalty, He said: "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour?" Then He added the much needed admonition: "Watch ye and pray, that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." The Saviour returned to His prayer. His next words are also words of resignation: "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done." He came to the three Apostles a second time to find them again asleep.

Spiritual writers—especially the earlier ones—go to some lengths developing points of contrast between St. Peter at the Last Supper and St. Peter in the garden. At the banquet he is boastful in his pledges of fidelity, yet he cannot keep peaceful watch for one hour in Gethsemani. As a matter of fact, St. Peter all through the Gospel narrative is a man of contrasts, because he is so much a man of impulses. It is his very impulsiveness that makes him so humanly attractive. The very humanity of St. Peter makes heaven appear less difficult of approach.

Jesus did not awaken the Apostles on this occasion, but went back to His prayer. When He had finished He came to them again and said kindly yet sorrowfully: "Sleep ye now and take your rest. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners." In a little while, when the torches of the soldiers were seen approaching through the darkness, the divine Master called to the three: "Rise, let us go. Behold, he is at hand that will betray Me."

The Valley of the Cedron was very calm that night—so calm that Jesus and the Apostles could hear the clanking swords of the soldiers as they came toward the gate. St. Luke tells us that the Saviour had gone into this garden many times before, and that was why Judas sought Him there. Hence,

after leaving the banquet hall perhaps, he made known his plans of betrayal to the priests. "Whomsoever I shall kiss," he said, "that is He. Hold Him fast." The traitor met Jesus at the gate in company with the entire group. Pretending, possibly, repentance for his sin, the betrayer came up to His divine Master and kissed Him on the cheek, giving the salutation, "Hail, Rabbi!" Jesus would still hold out hope of return to the unfortunate man. "Friend, whereto art thou come?" The word "friend" used by the Saviour shows it was not too late for the traitor to come back. His hands were still resting on the shoulders of His Master, but his heart was sealed to all the promptings of nature and of grace; for even the plea of his dear Teacher, which must have quickened gracious memories in any human heart, failed to awaken a single sigh of remorse. "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" What an appeal to every generous impulse of nature is contained in the direct, simple question! The memories of lovely days by the sea, along the river banks, over quiet country roads in the warm sunshine; words of gentleness, patience, great love; acts of kindness at every turn. It was the call of yearning love to the hardened traitor to fling down the bribe and weep for shame, as Peter will. But the call went out in vain.

The soldiers leaped out from behind the hedge and surrounded Jesus. "Whom seek ye?" He spoke quietly, but with no trace of fear. "Jesus of Nazareth," some of the leaders answered curtly. "I am He," He replied with a majesty of voice and gesture that caused the Romans to fall to the ground. They arose after some moments and the Saviour repeated His question, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they again answered, but this time with less insolence. "I have told you that I am He." Then adverting to the

Apostles, He added: "If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way." And here His followers showed a natural courage which they showed at no other time during the arrest and consequent trials. "Shall we strike with the sword?" some of them asked. Without waiting for an answer Peter severed the ear of Malchus, servant of the high priest, with one of the swords which he had brought with him, perhaps from the dining room. Jesus immediately restored the injured member with a touch, saying to the Apostle: "Put up thy sword into the scabbard; for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Some of the priests and ancients of the people now made their appearance, the enemies of Jesus increased in numbers, and the Saviour was arrested, while the Apostles fled in terror. Before going out of the gate with them, Jesus addressed these words to the Scribes and Pharisees: "You are come out, as it were to a robber, with swords and clubs to apprehend Me. I sat daily with you, teaching in the Temple, and you laid not hands on Me." They had no answer to make to this protest and were content to follow the soldiers through the gate of the garden.

Jesus was led away to the palace of the high priest Caiphas, where lived also the former high priest Annas; and just as soon as the company reached the house set for the ecclesiastical trial, the Roman soldiers withdrew. Their jurisdiction ceased once the Sacred Prisoner was handed over to the Jewish priests. The trial began when Annas asked the Saviour certain questions about His teaching. "I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogues and in the Temple, whither all the Jews resort; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them. Behold, they know what I have said." Annas was at a loss for a reply; but the

menials that surrounded him came to his rescue when one of them struck Jesus on the face and shouted: "Answerest Thou the high priest so!" The Saviour, undisturbed by such unheard-of affront, replied calmly: "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?"

Injustice very generally tries to silence telling argument by physical force. It was so when the Pharisees drove the young man cured of blindness out of the synagogue. It was so now. It will be so to the end of the world. Men will arise in the years to come, as they have risen in the past, to proclaim justice and freedom, and will sustain their position by arguments which the keenest minds shall not be able to overthrow. Prison and death will finally silence them.

Meantime Peter and John had followed the Saviour from the garden to the house of Caiphas. There the two Apostles became separated; John, who was known to the high priest, entering the house, and Peter remaining in the outer court. Peter was not anxious to come in contact with the ancients for fear he might be recognized as the man who had struck Malchus, the servant of the high priest. A fire was lighted in the hall, around which the servants of Caiphas were warming themselves. John asked the portress to admit Peter. She looked sharply at the latter and said: "Art not thou also one of this Man's disciples?" Peter feigned ignorance. "I know not what thou sayest." Then after he was admitted he stood before the fire with the servants. One of the maids observed him. "Art thou not one of His disciples?" His repudiation was absolute. "I am not." Finally a kinsman (according to St. John) of the servant whose ear the sword of Peter had severed, was more definite. "Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?" Peter confirmed his former denials with an oath. "I know not this Man of whom you

“speak.” It was then after midnight, and the crowing of the cock reminded Peter of the Master’s prophecy.

At the same moment Jesus walked from the room of Annas to the apartments of Caiphas. As He crossed the courtyard, Peter saw Him as He was led, bound, to the Sanhedrin council and his heart was crushed. Later on one of the more insistent servants, not satisfied with Peter’s falsehoods, continued to heckle and accuse him, that he was a follower of the Nazarene. Others joined her, and Peter was sorely pressed. “Surely thou art one of them; for thou art also a Galilean.” The Apostle, now at the end of his subterfuges, began to swear, saying: “I know not this Man.” Then, according to St. Mark, “The cock crew again, and Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny Me,’ and he began to weep.”

By this time the Sanhedrin had been called together in another room, where Jesus appeared for the more formal ecclesiastical trial. All the members were present, and Caiphas, as the leader, began questioning witnesses. Their testimony was insufficient and contradictory. Finally, two men were called who asserted that Jesus on one occasion said: “I will destroy this Temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another not made with hands.” As a matter of fact Jesus had not said, “I will destroy,” but “Destroy this Temple,” etc., which even in its literal meaning, apart altogether from the figurative sense, shows a very much less offensive content. The words were used by Him in the first year of His ministry, and referred to His Death and Resurrection: they would destroy the Temple of His Body and within three days He would raise It up again. To this last, as well as to many other accusations, Jesus made no reply. Caiphas, exasperated at what he wished to consider sullenness,

on the part of the Prisoner, cried out: "Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee?" The divine Teacher persevered in His reserve. "If Thou be the Christ, tell us," shouted the high priest. "If I shall tell you," Jesus answered, "you will not believe Me. And if I shall also ask you, you will not answer Me, nor let Me go." The present meeting was a plot to circumvent Jesus; not a trial to discover the truth. Then this official, assuming all the solemnity of tone and gesture at his command, cried out: "I adjure Thee, by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of the blessed God." "I am," came back the answer of the Son of God. "Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore, or made pretense to tear, his priestly robe as a sign of horror at such blasphemy. "Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy. What think you?" he shouted to his associate judges. All nodded their heads gravely and said with hypocritical seriousness: "He is guilty of death!"

This attitude of make-believe horror assumed by the high priest belongs to the stock-in-trade of all hypocrites. They feign abhorrence of what is not abhorrent; they discover frightfulness where no frightfulness exists. Ignorant or weak people are deceived by gesture and attitude; the innocent are condemned and punished, and it may take a century before their cause is set right by history.

The members of the court went away to plot new accusations for the civil trial the next morning, and Jesus was left to the mercy of the rabble. It was during this interval between the ecclesiastical and civil trials that Jesus suffered all those indignities mentioned in the Gospel from the servants



of Caiphas. They gathered around Him, ridiculed Him, spat upon Him, struck Him with their fists and with sticks. They put a cloth over His eyes, and each one passing by hit Him on the face, saying at the same time with an accent of hate and mockery: "Prophecy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee?"

It was probably at this moment, the second cock crowing, that Jesus looked at Peter with such indescribable sadness, and that the heart of the Apostle was broken with grief and shame. It is quite possible that the grief of Judas, who flung down his bribe, was as great as that of the chief Apostle. The difference between them was not so much one of intensity as of motive. The grief of Judas was lost in the black darkness of despair; that of St. Peter faded out into the soft light of hope. The sin of Judas was, indeed, unprovoked; no enemy of Jesus frightened him into betrayal, as St. Peter was frightened into denial. Yet the same forgiving Master would have extended His mercy to the one as well as to the other, if sorrow in each case had its complement of hope. Judas was not condemned because he betrayed His Master, but because he despaired of the mercy of his Redeemer.

At dawn the Sanhedrin reassembled, and after a renewal of accusations it was decided to lead Jesus to the court of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, for a civil trial. When the accusers arrived at the house of the governor, it was not later than six o'clock, and that official was not yet up. He was in ill humor at being aroused for the performance of an official duty so early in the day. So when he came out upon the terrace of the palace he asked abruptly: "What accusation bring you against this Man?" He knew, as St. Matthew observes, that jealousy was the motive inspir-

ing the men who brought the Redeemer before him. Members of the Sanhedrin replied with ready insolence: "If He were not a malefactor we would not have delivered Him up to thee." To show his contempt for Jewish law, Pilate said ironically: "Take Him you, and judge Him according to your law." They could not, however, by their jurisdiction put Jesus to death, which was the one punishment they wished to see executed against Him. Their reply was prompt and direct: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." And at once the ringleaders began to shout out their accusations in order to influence the Roman governor. "We have found this Man perverting our nation and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that He is Christ the King." Pilate, not caring to investigate the case before a prejudiced rabble, brought Jesus within the palace. "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" he asked, not without sympathy. Jesus replied: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me?" Did Pilate mean kingship in the ordinary sense or in the sense in which Jesus accepted Kingship? Pilate tried to explain his position. "Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee up to me. What hast Thou done?" "If My Kingdom," answered Jesus, "were of this world, My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now My Kingdom is not from hence." "Art Thou a King then?" asked Pilate in astonishment. "Thou sayest that I am a King; for this was I born, for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice." Pilate here interrupted with the abrupt question: "What is truth?" But he did not wait for an answer, a circumstance which has caused Gospel commentators to express regret ever since. Instead, he went out on the terrace and

said to the assemblage below: "I find no cause in Him." The crowd showed its disapproval, renewing the old and adding new accusations. Pilate turned to Jesus. "Dost not Thou hear how great testimonies they allege against Thee? Answerest Thou nothing?" The Saviour gave no reply, because no reply would serve any purpose with the rabble and their leaders gathered below on the terrace that morning.

The governor learned that Jesus was a Galilean and made the fact a pretext to transfer the Accused to Herod, who was the ruler of the province of Galilee. The mob accordingly led their Victim to Herod's palace. This ruler, who expected to be confronted with a wonder-worker who would perform miracles to gratify his curiosity, was disappointed in Jesus. The Saviour did not assume the rôle of the diviner or magician; He was absolutely silent under all Herod's questioning. And so clothed in the white garment, symbolic of a fool, He was sent back to Pilate.

Of necessity the Judean ruler was now obliged to continue the trial; and in this second examination he showed himself a very weak judge, trying to free the innocent Christ, yet making every effort to escape the displeasure of the Jews. Pilate's sin was essentially one of weakness. He was neither hostile nor even unsympathetic to Jesus. He mildly protested; he showed some consideration for the Victim; he tried compromise; then he wavered and finally gave in. As we see him presiding at the trial, he does not appear conspicuously unjust in his attitude, though he is very unjust in what he consents to do. His was not a nature marked by cruelty. He appears indolent, and indolence begets weakness, and essential weakness always surrenders to any marked show of force.

"You have a custom," Pilate reasoned with the ancients, "that I should release one unto you at the Pasch." "Yes, it is

customary and right," they answered. "Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas or Jesus, who is called Christ the King of the Jews?" At this moment Pilate's wife, who in tradition bears the name Claudia Procula, wishing to deter her husband from participation in the death of Jesus, the Prophet of whom she had heard, sent to him this solemn message: "Have thou nothing to do with that just Man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him." Pilate, more anxious now than ever to free Jesus, repeated his alternative: "Whether will you of the two to be released unto you?" The rabble roared like untamed beasts: "Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas" [the notorious criminal]. "What will you then," asked Pilate—in the hope of some other compromise, perhaps—"that I do to the King of the Jews that is called Christ?" "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" came the answering shout. "Why, what evil hath this Man done? I find no cause of death in Him. I will chastise Him therefore and let Him go."

This was Pilate's second expedient to free Jesus. It was not a very considerate one, nor one likely to raise the Victim in the estimation of the mob; but it was, perhaps, the one that suggested itself most readily to the indolent judge. The rabble, excited by the leaders, kept up the cry, "Crucify Him!" Then in what has become a classic example of surrender to mob rule, the judge took water, went through the formality of washing his hands, and said: "I am innocent of the blood of this just Man; look you to it." It is needless to point out that since Jesus was innocent it was the duty of Pilate to release and protect Him. The answer of the mob to the pretext of the judge was the self-imposed curse: "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

Jesus was publicly scourged beside the tribunal. Often this

punishment of scourging was so violent that the victim died under the ordeal. During this terrible humiliation to which the Saviour was subjected, Pilate withdrew. Probably with his finer sense of feeling, he could not endure the brutal sight. Following the scourging, a scarlet cloak was thrown over the shoulders of the Son of God and a plaited crown of thorns was pressed down upon His sacred head. A reed was forced into His hand, the crowd knelt mockingly before Him and cried: "Hail, King of the Jews!"

The moment had come for Pilate's final appeal. He ordered Jesus to be brought out to the terrace before the multitude; then with a gesture of pity he pronounced the historic words: "Behold the Man!" His appeal had no other effect than to draw from the infuriated crowd, led by the priests, the cry: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Then Pilate said, "Take Him you and crucify Him; for I find no cause in Him."

The words are in reality a condemnation; the pronouncement of a sentence by a well-disposed, immeasurably weak judge. Apart altogether from the divine plan, the act of Pontius Pilate is an unmistakable example of the surrender of the ordered processes of law to rule by the rabble.

Meantime Judas, the betrayer, who in the human accounting was the cause of the arrest and the trials, wandered about dazed and haggard at the recollection of his shame. Despair blinded him, and through the gloom he saw no soft, welcoming light of hope. "I have sinned," he said in self-accusation to the priests and the ancients, "in betraying innocent blood." They had the ready answer, which all who betray God, country, or any high cause must expect to receive: "What is that to us? Look thou to it." He had served them, had received his price. The unholy contract was made in deception and hate. No love or sympathy could now sweeten the bitterness of the

fallen Apostle's disillusionment. He threw down his bribe and fled away from the open arms of welcoming mercy. "And casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple, he departed, and went and hanged himself with a halter."

From the money was bought the potter's field, the burying place of strangers. Jesus was accounted little indeed in the price that was paid for His Blood; and as an added humiliation in the scale of divine condescension, He was accounted little in setting aside the price of that Blood to buy a place of burial for outcast dead.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Find some helps to realize what Jesus suffered in Gethsemani.
2. Explain, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
3. "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" How should the betrayer have been affected by this question?
4. Picture the scene when Jesus healed the ear of Malchus. Do you think this act caused great surprise?
5. In what way does Peter's denial reveal his human weakness?
6. Look up the occasion when Jesus said, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
7. Give the names of any ten saints who suffered great persecutions. Review the lives of any two.
8. How do modern atheists, who dare God to strike them dead, compare with the servants who asked Christ to prophesy who struck Him?
9. When men blasphemously challenge God to strike them dead, God withholds His hand. Give some reasons why He does so.
10. Why do Gospel commentators express regret that Pilate did not wait for the answer to his question, "What is truth?"
11. Have you met with any other person in studying the life of Christ who reminds you of Pilate?
12. What sins did Christ atone for by His scourging? By the crowning with thorns?
13. You might be interested in tracing the later history and wretched death of the enemies of Jesus—Annas, Caiphas, Herod, Pilate, Judas. (Matt. xxvii, 3-10; Acts i:18.)



## XXIX. JESUS' DEATH AND BURIAL

*Crucifixion a Mode of Punishment Made Use of by the Assyrians, the Persians, and the Scythians; By the Romans for Slaves; Crucifixion as a Punishment; Jesus Takes Up His Cross; The Procession; Simon of Cyrene; The Holy Women; Golgotha; The Narcotic Drink Refused; Crucifixion; Words of Jesus; Casting Dice for the Seamless Garment; Conduct of His Enemies beneath the Cross; Mary the Mother of Jesus; Words to Her and to St. John; Death of Jesus; Signs Following the Death; Centurion's Act of Faith; Piercing the Sacred Side; Removing the Body from the Cross; Burial; Guarding the Tomb. (Matt. xxvii; Mark xv; Luke xxiii; John xix)*

Crucifixion was not a Jewish manner of execution. Strange to say, it originated in the mind of a woman called Semiramis, and was used as a mode of capital punishment by the Assyrians, the Persians, and the Scythians. Later on, it was taken up by the Carthaginians and the Egyptians. From these it was passed on to the Greeks and Romans, by whom it was exercised as the usual form of death meted out to slaves.

According to the law of Moses, which was the law of the Jews, a person condemned to death might be beheaded, strangled, burned, or stoned. It was never permitted to exercise against him the punishment of crucifixion, although after he was dead his body might be attached to a cross in order that this supreme ignominy might serve as a wholesome deterrent for others. The Romans introduced death by crucifixion into Palestine as a form of punishment for malefactors and rebels against the Empire. Varus is said to have crucified two thousand revolutionists at the time of the death of Herod the Great; and the Emperor Titus, after the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, set up as many crosses as space would permit for the execution of the captured Jews.

Death by crucifixion was not merely the taking of life, as we find in more humane civilizations. It was the infliction of punishment, which was to continue as long as the victim retained consciousness, and was to cease only when death came to bring relief. Jesus, then, was not merely put to death; He was put to death suffering a maximum of punishment under the most humiliating conditions. With the exactness and prevision of a military nation, the Romans kept their crosses in stock so that the condemned would always have his gibbet awaiting him. It must not be too long or too heavy, for the victim must carry it himself to the scene of his execution.

The mock robes of royalty were removed from Jesus and He was again clothed in His own garments. Accompanied by two criminals sentenced to a like punishment, He took the Cross upon His shoulder and went out through the streets of the city to be crucified. Roman soldiers, under the command of a centurion, led the procession. They marched from the palace of the procurator and went toward one of the city gates. Our Saviour, weakened from anxiety, vigil, the severe scourging, and the crowning with thorns, walked slowly. The Roman soldiers, seeing His weakened condition, did not hurry Him unduly. A man named Simon, who belonged to a colony of Jews transported years before to Cyrene, was returning to Jerusalem from his country and met the melancholy procession. Perhaps out of pity, or on being requisitioned by the soldiers, he took up and carried for some distance the cross which Jesus bore. Artists, without any Gospel warrant, represent Simon as lifting up the foot of the Cross. This act, instead of helping the Redeemer, would have added to His burden.

It might have been midday when the procession took its way out of the town. Crowds had hastened from every direction to get a view of the Condemned. Many women were in

the throng, and some of them openly sympathized with the Saviour in words and laments. Jesus looked at them and spoke for the first time since He left the Palace. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days will come wherein they will say: 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck.' Then they shall begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' And to the hills, 'Cover us!' For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall not be done in the dry?" Which means, that if green wood burns when kindled, how much more rapidly will dry wood burn. Or if Jesus suffers so for the sins of men, what sufferings must come to all those people for whom He suffers in vain! If He who is innocent thus bears the punishments of Heaven, what will all those who are not innocent have to endure! Or, according to other exegetes, if by His own race He is treated so cruelly, what may He expect from the rest of the world!

They reached the place of crucifixion. The Jews were accustomed to execute criminals on some prominent elevation by the side of a much traveled road, in order that passers-by might note the punishment meted out to evildoers. For Jesus, Golgotha, meaning "skull," probably because of its barren surface, was selected as the scene of the Crucifixion. Some of the soldiers made ready the Cross, or dug a hole in which to set it. Others, according to custom, offered the Saviour a drink of wine mixed with myrrh, which was supposed to have a narcotic effect. The Redeemer merely tasted the drink, having no wish to mitigate in any way the punishments of expiation.

He was then laid upon the Cross. There were two ways in which those condemned were attached to the wood—by ropes or by nails. In the case of Jesus, the much more cruel method

of nailing the hands and feet was chosen. It is disputed whether the feet were transfixcd by one or two nails. St. Gregory Nazianzen holds the opinion that both feet were pierced by a single nail; but St. Cyprian inclines to the belief that two nails were used. The Saviour was stretched upon the wood, and the soldiers hurried through their terrible task. Imagination will readily picture all the sufferings of those moments—much more effectively, in fact, than any mere pen-painting could do. The two criminals, who left the palace with Jesus and accompanied Him all the way, were crucified with Him, one at either side. The cry of Jesus, His first on the Cross, is one of supreme forgiveness—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He puts in practice His own earlier teaching: "Pray for them that persecute you." Pilate saw to it that the sign, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," was attached to the Cross just above the head of the Redeemer. This he did despite the protests of the priests, whom he dismissed curtly with the words: "What I have written, I have written."

While Jesus was suspended between earth and sky the soldiers below the Cross divided His garments among them with that callous unconcern peculiar to executioners. This was according to the Roman law which gave to those who conducted executions the clothing of their victims. According to St. John, the men who put the Redeemer to death were four in number, and possibly there were four each for the two criminals at either side of Him. The four who stood below the Cross of Jesus began at once to select the different parts of His clothing. The head-dress went to one, the sandals to another, the cincture to a third, until everyone was given some one or other of His garments. The tunic, made of a single piece without any seams, was of especial value. It was

too precious, and therefore too eagerly sought, to be handed over to any one of the executioners as a prize by common agreement. And to cut it into four parts would have destroyed its usefulness altogether. So a few dice were shaken in one of the soldiers' helmets, and the garment conceded to the winning numbers. Thus in this sordid act was fulfilled the Psalmist's words; "They parted my garments amongst them, and upon my vesture they cast lots."<sup>1</sup> Satisfied with their allotment, these callous Romans put away their lances and sat on the ground with absolute indifference, to guard their suffering Victim.

His real enemies, however, by no means shared in the indifference of the guards. Their hatred was sated at last. While many of those assembled to witness the Crucifixion stood at some distance from the crosses and watched the suspended bodies in silence, even if not with sympathy, the ring-leaders, who for so long had been plotting the death of Jesus, now stood defiantly in front of Him to taunt and torture, vying with one another for the distinction of throwing up at Him the bitterest and most biting insults.

They felt their hour of triumph. They were exultant. The Nazarene, the would-be Messiah, was defeated and crushed. "Vah!" they cried, with a curse and a shake of the head, "Thou that destroyest the Temple of God and in three days dost rebuild it, save Thy own Self; if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross!" Yet others said in bitter irony: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save!" They taunted Him, "If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross and we will believe Him!" They laughed scornfully up into His blessed Face. "He trusted in God; let Him now deliver Him if He will have Him, for He said: 'I

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxi, 19.

am the Son of God.' ” The soldiers added their insults: “If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself.” Even one of the men crucified beside Him flung from his gibbet this alternative: “If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us.” The other criminal, who has come to be known as the Good Thief, upbraided his scoffing brother in evil. “Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation.” Then in self-accusation he continued: “And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done no evil.” Finally came the cry of contrite confidence that saved him: “Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom.” Mercy was triumphant, for Jesus said to him: “Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.”

There under the Cross stood the heroic Mother of Jesus, an example to the suffering mothers of all ages; and Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Salome the wife of Zebedee, and Mary Magdalen, the great penitent and the devoted friend of the Crucified. John the Evangelist, too, was there, though he refrains from mentioning his own name or that of Salome his mother. The words of Jesus to His holy Mother are brief and touching: “Woman, behold thy son.” He referred, as we know, to His Apostle, St. John. Then addressing this latter, the Saviour said: “Behold thy mother.” Thus the Blessed Lady was given into the keeping of the dearest friend of Jesus among the Apostles.

The part played by the mother of Jesus in the drama of the Crucifixion is given meager record by the Evangelists. Doubtless it was their purpose to center all thoughts on the great scenes of Redemption and on the Person of the Redeemer. We know that Mary stood at the foot of the Cross, and imagination will supply what the Gospel narrative omits. Her



position of mother carries an unforgettable appeal. It is not only the Son of the Eternal Father who is crucified: it is the Son of Mary, flesh of her flesh, whose hands and feet are bleeding and broken, whose hair is matted with blood, whose eyes grow dim, whose lips are parted, whose breast is heaving with every difficult breath. She stands and watches, noting every word and movement. She would rather not see Him suffer, but she loves Him so much she cannot go away. Better to see Him in the great pain of the agony, than not to see Him at all. She hopes it will soon be over, and yet she would not shorten the great expiation by a single moment. She is the great example for all suffering mothers. Those who have given sons to some great cause, to see them later marched out to a quick death and an obscure grave, their hopes unfulfilled, their dreams not come true, will take heart thinking of the Virgin Mother, below the Cross, hearing the derisive shouts of priest and Scribe, and the curses of the dice throwers above the heavy breathing of the white Figure.

There was silence for some moments after Jesus had spoken to His mother and St. John. Then He cried to His Eternal Father: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Some of those standing nearby, mistaking the popular Jewish word 'Eli' for the name of Elias, thought Jesus was calling on the great prophet and protector of the Jews for help. "Stay, let us see if Elias will come to deliver Him." One of the agonies peculiar to crucifixion was the thirst caused the victim. Hence the cry, "I thirst," just before He offered Himself to the Eternal Father, indicated a literal thirst, as well as that spiritual thirst which Gospel commentators insist upon. One of the soldiers, perhaps out of pity, dipped a sponge in a vessel full of vinegar, which, St. John is careful to note, was set there. He fixed the sponge on the end of a reed and offered

it to the dying Saviour. Then the long death agony was brought to a close. "It is consummated," came the relieving sigh. As the head fell forward upon the breast, Jesus said His final words: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

The signs that followed were unmistakable enough and terrible enough to make the enemies of Jesus tremble for their crime. The veil of the Temple was split into two parts, the earth shook, the rocks were broken asunder, and holy men, buried for long ages, issued from their graves and walked along the streets of the Holy City. It is significant that out of the Gentile world should come the first expression of repentance and the first profession of Faith following these divine manifestations. The centurion who commanded the Roman soldiers, beholding these wonders, looked up and saw yet again through the darkness the white Body of the dead Christ. "Indeed," he exclaimed in an act of acceptance, "this was the Son of God!"

The close of the day was near at hand and the most solemn Sabbath would begin in a few hours. It would be unseemly to have dead bodies suspended from crosses on the great feast. The enemies of Jesus rushed to Pilate to ask that the Body of the Saviour and those of the two others be taken down and buried. According to Roman custom, the legs of those crucified were broken in order to hasten death. Or sometimes the final stroke was inflicted on the head or breast. Pilate ordered the soldiers to carry out the provisions of this custom. And so the legs of the two brigands were broken, but when they came to Jesus they found that He was already dead. To be absolutely sure, however, one of the soldiers pierced His sacred Side with a lance, and out of the wound leaped a mixture of

blood and water. In this circumstance, also, another prophecy was fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, now become a disciple of Jesus, after having secured the necessary permission from Pilate, set about taking down the Body of the Redeemer. Helping him in this holy ministration was Nicodemus, who, St. John reminds us, went on a former occasion to see Jesus by night. By his appearance now he was trying to make reparation for his former timidity. Joseph procured a shroud, Nicodemus brought a quantity of aromatics. Pious and reverent hands loosed the Body from the Cross. It was prepared for burial, anointed, and enveloped in a winding sheet. Gently they bore the precious Burden to a neighboring garden where Joseph had caused a tomb to be hewn out of a rock. The dead Saviour was placed within the tomb, and the door was sealed with a great stone.

Next day the enemies of Jesus went to Pilate with the request that he set a guard before the sepulcher lest the followers of the Nazarene steal the body. "We have remembered that the seducer said, while He was yet alive: 'After three days I will rise again.' Command, therefore, the sepulcher to be guarded until the third day; lest perhaps His disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He is risen from the dead'; and the last error shall be worse than the first." Pilate, wearied with their many importunities, said with a show of impatience: "You have a guard; go guard it as you know." And so Roman soldiers were placed before the tomb to prevent the possibility of any imposture. The Body of Jesus remained in the grave until the moment of the Resurrection.

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<sup>1</sup> Zacharias xii, 10.

## STUDY TOPICS

1. Find any material you can on crucifixion as a method of capital punishment.
2. Why did not the soldiers hurry Jesus on the journey to Calvary? Why did they permit Simon to help Him?
3. Why did not Jesus drink the wine and myrrh?
4. What does Jesus teach us by crying out to His Father, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"? When especially must our cry be the cry of Jesus?
5. Establish a comparison between the insults His enemies offered Our Lord on the cross with those offered Him now in the Blessed Sacrament.
6. What is the significance of Jesus' giving His Holy Mother into the keeping of St. John?
7. What hope was there for the centurion who said, "Indeed this was the Son of God"? His words are the sign of some virtue received. What virtue?
8. Was the Crucifixion absolutely necessary for Redemption? Give your reasons.
9. Read the description of the Crucifixion in Schuyler's *The Courage of Christ* (Physical Suffering).
10. Find in the Crucifixion, and in the events leading up to it, the incorporation of every idea offered in the Sermon on the Mount.

### XXX. THE RESURRECTION AND AFTER

*Holy Women Come to the Sepulcher; Mary Magdalen Calls the Apostles Peter and John; Two Angels in the Tomb; Holy Women Tell the Apostles; Apostles Incredulous; Peter and John at the Tomb; Saviour Appears to Magdalen; Saviour Appears to the Holy Women; Flight of Roman Guard; Bribed to Say Body Was Stolen; Jesus Appears to His Disciples on their Way to Emmaus; Reveals Himself to Them; First Appearance to the Apostles; Thomas's Profession of Faith; Apostles Leave Jerusalem for Capharnaum; Miraculous Draft of Fishes; "Feed My Lambs"; "Feed My Sheep"; The Master Takes Peter Apart; Divine Commission to Teach and Baptize; Promise of the Holy Ghost; Witnesses to the Uttermost Parts of the World; Ascension; Work of Redemption Completed. (Mark xvi; John xx; Matt. xxviii; Luke xxiv; Mark xvi; John xxi; Acts i.)*

The body of Jesus remained in the grave the entire Sabbath. On the morning of the first day of the week, those holy women who had so faithfully kept vigil beneath the Cross during the Agony went to the sepulcher, taking sweet unguents with which, according to very general custom, to anoint the Sacred Body. Not knowing that a guard of soldiers had been set to watch the tomb, they had certain misgivings about being able to move the great stone which closed the door. "Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulcher?" They did not then know that a short time before, while the Roman guard was still watching, a violent crash as of thunder had shaken the whole garden in which the sepulcher stood; neither did they know that this Roman guard was already fleeing in terror toward Jerusalem, and that an angel of the Lord, full of power and beauty, had rolled back the stone. Seeing the stone removed, Mary Magdalen, thinking, perhaps, that the Holy Body

had been desecrated, rushed back to tell the Apostles. She found Peter and John, who were probably living together in the same house, and said hurriedly: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him!" Meantime, the other women came closer to the tomb and found courage enough to enter. The Body of Jesus was not there. Instead, two angels, seated one on either side, guarded the place where the Body had been laid. The sight frightened the women, who flung themselves in holy dread on the ground. One of the angels reassured them. "Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. Why seek you the living with the dead? He is risen; He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him. But go tell His Disciples and Peter that He is risen. He will go before you into Galilee. There you shall see Him as He told you. Lo, I have foretold it to you." The women set out at once to find Peter and the disciples. They discovered the other Apostles who were living in the city, but did not meet Peter and John. The Apostles were incredulous, declared the women were the subjects of delusion, and refused to accept their story.

Meantime John, the younger man, reached the tomb, followed soon after by Peter. Some Gospel commentators profess to see in the circumstance of St. John's reaching the sepulcher before St. Peter the greater love which that Apostle felt for his Divine Master. It was the impelling force that quickened his steps, the divine urge that gave wings to his feet. However, since it is not necessary to attribute divine causes to what may readily be explained by the laws of nature, we are free to accept the natural and very plausible reason that as St. John was a much younger man he could easily outdistance the other. The angels were not visible to the



two Apostles. They saw only the linen bands lying on the floor, and the cloth which had enveloped the head of the Saviour neatly folded and laid away. Excited and perplexed they returned to the city to communicate the facts to the other Apostles and to take counsel with them. Magdalen, who probably arrived after them, remained at the tomb and wept softly for all the holy memories of Jesus. To her appeared two angels, clad in garments of celestial glory, who asked: "Woman, why weepest thou?" She answered: "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him." Then came the supreme reward of her fidelity when another voice echoed the angel's question: "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Mary mistook this second voice for that of the man who had charge of the garden. "Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away."

It would appear from this statement of Magdalen that she did not then consider the disappearance of the Body of the Redeemer to be the result of divine Resurrection. Christ's appearance was to be the seal of her faith. Speaking for himself, St. John says: "Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulcher, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead." All who went to the tomb felt a natural grief that the Body of the dear Master was no longer there, but did not consider the disappearance of the Body a proof of Resurrection. When direct tidings came to them, then the Resurrection became an everlasting certitude. The Presence in the garden pronounced the single word, "Mary!" The penitent and devoted friend recognized the tone; and the cry, "Rabboni, Master!" was her answer of affectionate recognition. She would have kissed His garments in holy reverence, but this joy was denied.

"Do not touch Me," admonished Jesus, "for I am not ascended to My Father. But go to My brethren and say to them: 'I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God!'" Jesus disappeared even while she was still in the attitude of listening.

Mary Magdalen next went to the Apostles to give them the glad tidings. St. Mark <sup>1</sup> narrates the circumstances as follows: "But He, rising early the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalen, out of whom He had cast seven devils. She went and told them that she had been with Him, who were mourning and weeping. And they, hearing that He was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe."

Jesus appeared to the other holy women as they were returning from the city after taking the message to the Apostles, and greeted them with the salutation, "All hail!" As soon as they had received the first news of the Resurrection at the tomb, these women went back to Jerusalem, missing Magdalen and the two Apostles, who probably came by another road. Like Magdalen, they were now seized with a reverent fear, but recognized the Master by voice and appearance; and with faces pressed to the ground, offered Him their adoring love. Noting the fear that possessed them, the Redeemer gave assurance in the words: "Fear not. Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee; there they shall see Me."

Mary Magdalen and these holy women were not the only announcers of the great fact of the Resurrection. The Roman guard, panic-stricken at what they had witnessed at the tomb, rushed into the city and, as St. Matthew records, "told the chief priests all things that had been done." These latter, determined to stop at once the spread of a truth so disastrous to their hopes and projects, paid these soldiers handsomely to

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<sup>1</sup> Mark xvi, 9-11.

tell all questioners: "His disciples came by night and stole Him away when we were asleep." No doubt, as St. Matthew tells us, a very considerable sum of money was given for the propagation of this preposterous falsehood. The tale is so full of contradictions, however, that it carries its own refutation. To sleep while on guard was a very serious breach of rigorous Roman discipline; but the chief priests gave assurance to these soldiers that they would not be punished for the self-accusation. Moreover, in the rush of events the priests had not time to note the incongruity of sleeping soldiers asserting that the Body of Jesus was stolen while they slept. Indeed, the chief priests' explanation of the removal of the Body gives added assurance of the truth of the Resurrection.

During the afternoon of the same day two disciples of Jesus set out for Emmaus, a suburb of Jerusalem. Jesus joined them as they journeyed along. Their conversation very naturally was taken up with the great events that had occurred during the previous days. "What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk and are sad?" Jesus asked after He had continued with them for a short distance. They were surprised that one coming out of Jerusalem was ignorant of all that had happened. "Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days?" "What things?" asked the Saviour, affecting total ignorance. "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet, mighty in word and work before God and all the people. And how our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him." Then one of them—Cleophas probably—added, "But we hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel; and now besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done."

There is a note of sadness and disappointment here. Like

all the followers of Jesus at this time, these two disciples do not seem to look very hopefully to the Resurrection of their Master. Their attitude seems to be one of regret and incredulity; though perhaps their doubts concerning the great event are somewhat lessened by the news from the holy women. "Yea, and certain women also of our company affrighted us, who before it was light were at the sepulcher; and not finding His Body, came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive." And in their minds the statement of the women has been strengthened by other testimony, for they add: "And some of our people went to the sepulcher and found it so as the women had said, but Him they found not."

The Saviour had been silent all this time; then He showed His unfailing mercy and spoke words of reproof first, and later of enlightenment. "O foolish and slow of heart, to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?" Then taking up the prophecies He explained how in Himself was fulfilled all that these had foretold. The two men were so interested in His beautiful exegesis that they had reached the end of their journey almost before they knew it. The Redeemer made as if to continue His way alone, but was prevailed upon to remain with them. "Stay with us, because it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent." He graciously consented to remain, and supped with them. Then came the joy of recognition at the breaking of the bread which Jesus distributed to them. Whether it was some characteristic act He performed that revealed Him, or whether the manifestation came as the direct result of divine grace we do not know. Nor is it important. Enough for them and for us that they recognized their Risen Master. Then He disappeared,

and they were left to comment on their feelings. "Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way and opened to us the Scriptures?" And so their faith was sealed by the vision of Him.

The first manifestation of Jesus to the Apostolic group came in the evening. The door of the house in which they were hiding was locked because of their fear of the enemies of Jesus. The Master entered and made Himself visible. Their previous fear was intensified to panic by this sudden apparition, until the Saviour reassured them. "Peace be to you! It is I; fear not." The joy of recognition had not yet come to them, and Jesus said very gently: "Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" With infinite condescension He gave them proof that He was their Master and Redeemer. "See My hands and feet, that it is I Myself; handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you can see Me to have." And there in that upper room these men, shaken and troubled, looked with wondering eyes at their Master come back to life. To make Himself one with them, He asked with appealing humanness: "Have you anything to eat?" They had almost finished supper, and handed Jesus what remained—a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb. This act of gentle familiarity brought complete recognition and confidence to the minds and hearts of the Apostles. Then, as with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, Jesus explained to them His Death and Resurrection in the light of the prophecies, giving them besides the divine commission to teach. "Peace be to you; as the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." A little later, breathing on them, He gave them the power of remitting and retaining sins. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."



The Apostle Thomas was not present when Jesus made this first post-Resurrection visit. Gospel commentators and biographers of the Saviour give reasons to explain his absence, reasons which are altogether speculative. When the Apostles told him, with every outward sign of joy, that they had seen their Master, the absent Apostle did not share in their enthusiasm. He was unreasonable; he was stubborn. "Except," he demanded, "I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my fingers into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

The opinion expressed that Thomas at this time was separated from the Apostolic group and his soul in a state of doubt in regard to the Resurrection, is of course without Gospel warrant. It is quite reasonable, however, to suppose that his insistence on the direct proofs of sense for the great fact that Jesus was come out of the grave may be due to disappointment and wounded feelings because he was not present when Jesus had appeared. Thomas remained in his condition of unbelief for a whole week. Then, again on the first day, Jesus appeared a second time when the unbelieving Apostle was present. He saluted as on His previous visit: "Peace be to you!" And now the mercy of Jesus was greater than the unfaith and stubbornness of the erring Thomas. "Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand and put it into My side; and be not faithless but believing." "My Lord and my God!" came the cry of answering faith. The words that the Master addressed to him after his generous confession and acceptance are an admonition, and the statement of a universal truth. "Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and have believed."

And now we note the hurried departure of the Apostles from



Jerusalem for Galilee, where they selected Capharnaum as their headquarters and St. Peter as their spokesman. The amount of apostolic work which they did is not recorded, but it is probable they set about preaching the doctrines of Jesus in their humble way.

One evening during this early ministry, at the suggestion of St. Peter they rowed out on Lake Genesareth for the purpose of spending some time at their former employment. It is very probable they went back to this old life and service of theirs less for recreation than to make a livelihood. They had very little in the way of worldly goods and it was important for them to have food and clothing in a country at this time by no means friendly. The long night passed, but they caught nothing. Just as day was breaking a Man appeared on the shore who was none other than the divine Master, although the Apostles failed to distinguish Him from where they were. He called to them: "Children, have you any meat?" "No," they answered, thinking He was some hungry traveler. "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find," He commanded. They obeyed, thinking perhaps He knew more about the business of fishing than they did, and brought well-filled nets out of the deep. The Apostle St. John, the first to recognize his divine Master, cried, "It is the Lord!" Then the impetuous Peter at once leaped into the water and swam toward the shore. When the Apostles reached the place where their Master waited for them, they found He had bread and a partly broiled fish almost ready to be served. They counted the fish they had caught, numbering one hundred and fifty-three, and then Jesus graciously invited them to "Come and dine." The food was miraculously multiplied to satisfy them all. And as they sat around the fire, perhaps memories of another fire in the court within the house of

Caiphas came back to Peter and subdued him to sadness. Jesus remembered, too. "Simon Son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" The Saviour referred to Peter's boast that though all should be scandalized he would be faithful. "Yea, Lord," the Apostle answered humbly; "Thou knowest that I love Thee." We find no difficulty here in visualizing the Apostle with his sense of shrinking. And for all that, his answer is essentially brave. Then said the Master with divine authority, "Feed My Lambs." The question was repeated and Peter answered even more humbly than at first: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I Love Thee." The Saviour repeated His command: "Feed My Lambs." When the question was put to him a third time, the anxious Apostle said with energy in which reserve and diffidence were not wanting: "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." "Feed My Sheep," commanded the divine Shepherd. Then the Saviour addressed to His first representative on earth the sad prophecy which foretold St. Peter's death by crucifixion: "Amen, amen, I say to thee: when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not."

Then we have the characteristic little scene when Jesus told the first Apostle to follow Him, and they went away together. John went after them, and Peter, hearing his footsteps behind them, turned to his Master and said abruptly: "Lord, what shall this man do?" "So will I have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me." With these words Jesus withdrew with Peter. It is quite reasonable to suppose that while they were together the divine Master gave His first representative certain personal instructions for his guidance in the government of the Church.

On yet another of His apparitions to the Apostles in Galilee Jesus gave the divine commission to teach. "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

The disciples' stay in Galilee did not last a whole month. After they were consoled by many appearances on the part of their holy Master, the time came for them to return to Jerusalem. The little caravan assembled, composed of the Apostles, Mary the Mother of the Saviour, and many new believers whose names are unknown. Arrived at the Holy City, the company found lodgings as best they could, in the inns or with their friends. The Master continued to live on familiar terms with them, eating at their table, calling them together for special instructions and speaking to them of the Kingdom of God.

In one of these instructions, Jesus announced to them the near fulfillment of the Father's promise, that they must leave their nets forever and devote themselves exclusively to His service. He directed their attention to the Scriptures when He said: "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead the third day; and that penance and the remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

At last one day when Jesus had led them to the Mount of Olives, in the direction of Bethany, He spoke to them concerning the future. "Lord," they asked, "wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?" He did not inform

them. "It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in His own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth."

Jesus ceased speaking. He extended His hands in benediction. Slowly He was lifted from the ground; up through the quiet air He passed and His transformed Body disappeared behind a luminous cloud. "Ye men of Galilee," came the voices of two men standing near them, "why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven."

The work of Jesus was over. He had finished the Redemption of fallen man. His Apostles had to await for ten days the coming of the Holy Ghost who would give them the light and courage necessary to apply the healing of Redemption to the wounds of the world.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. What is to be thought of the Apostles' incredulity over the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus?
2. Why did not Jesus wish Mary Magdalen to touch Him?
3. What were the feelings of the Jewish authorities when they heard that Jesus had risen?
4. Find Emmaus on your map.
5. Prepare to ask and answer five questions on the Resurrection.
6. Give five points in this chapter which may serve as the subject of meditation.
7. Upon what do we base the hope of our resurrection?
8. Verify the following appearances of Jesus after His Resurrection:
  - a) To Mary Magdalen (John xx, 14; Mark xvi, 9).
  - b) To the other women (Matt. xxviii, 9).
  - c) To St. Peter (Luke xxiv, 34; I Cor. xv, 5).

- d)* To the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, on Sunday evening (Mark xvi, 12, 13; Luke xxiv, 13-32).
- e)* To the other Apostles (except Thomas) on Sunday evening (Mark xvi, 14; Luke xxiv, 36; John xx, 19-24).
- f)* To the other Apostles, including Thomas, a week later (John xx, 24-29).
- g)* In Galilee near Lake Genesareth, to seven disciples (John xxi, 14).
- h)* On a mountain in Galilee to a multitude of disciples (Matt. xxviii, 16-20; I Cor. xv, 6).
- i)* To the Eleven (Mark xvi, 19-20; Luke xxiv, 50; Acts i, 3-12; I Cor. xv, 7).

9. Quote texts in which the Holy Ghost is promised.

10. "Feed My Lambs; feed My Sheep." Who are the lambs? Who are the sheep?





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